

ELECTION '97: no one's pulling our strings

## THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Cold and windy (R45p) 40p

## THE TABLOID

Star Wars strikes back

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## ESSAY

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heaven, hell and  
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## Trainspotting: the reality

Jason Bennetto  
Crime Correspondent

A disturbing picture emerged yesterday of a British society caught up in a culture of drugs, widespread illegality, official corruption, and an inability to cope with the rising tide of narcotic abuse.

A Home Office study estimates that there are more than 30 million drug deals each year in London alone, of which only one in every 4,000 street sales results in an arrest. If the average deal costs £20 the annual amount spent by consumers on drugs in the capital is £600m.

Researchers also highlighted a fraud involving private doctors being paid £25 bribes to prescribe large amounts of drugs to addicts. Users charged new drug consumers an introductory fee to meet the corrupt doctors.

The report *Tackling Local Drug Markets* gives a fascinating but depressing insight into the secretive world of dealers, buyers, and addicts. It shows

A drugs such as heroin, crack cocaine, and ecstasy, that takes place in public or semi public places.

Of the estimated 30 million drugs transactions in London each year, deals that take place on the street or in public places are believed to account for between three and five million. The majority of sales, usually of cannabis, occur in homes.

The people questioned spent on average £333 a week or £17,300 a year on their drug habit.

The core of the research examined six street dealing sites in London. A picture of each area or "market" was built up using interviews with drug users, probation officers, the police, and drug workers.

A picture of a multi drug abuse emerged in which orders were taken on stolen mobile phones, people queued to obtain illegal drugs from pharmacies, secret identities were used, consumers bought their daily fix along with their shopping and a casual disregard for the police were commonplace. Hard drugs appeared freely available in all the areas studied.

The researchers also discovered a scam involving corrupt private doctors and pharmacists. The private GPs were charging a weekly £25 "consultation fee" to be paid before the prescriptions were handed over. Some doctors are believed to have long lists of "clients" who take advantage of the system. "The least scrupulous of private prescribers can maintain high throughput by offering minimal patient care: some respondents told us that they were given prescriptions in the absence of drug screening, medical histories and urine tests," said the report.

They found that excessive amount of drugs were being prescribed, suggesting the doctor knew some were for resale.

Drug users reported that pharmacists could also make large amounts of money by handling the private prescriptions. "Some of our respondents firmly believed that their doctor and pharmacist worked in profit sharing partnerships," said the report.

"Pharmacists often allow users credit. This enabled the users to collect half their prescription, sell it and then pay off the pharmacist and collect the remainder of the prescription."

Researchers estimate that of the 500,000 people in London who regularly take illicit drugs - mostly cannabis - between 20,000 and 40,000 are "problem users". In 1994 the Metropolitan Police prosecuted or cautioned 23,000 people for drug possession or supply offences.

Sales of street heroin were typically £10 for a 0.1g bag, crack was on average £20 for a rock. Users obtained their money from a number of methods including drug dealing, benefit fraud, shoplifting and prostitution.

Two-thirds of the people interviewed said their market place was violent. Being mugged, either for drugs

Drug culture: Ewan McGregor in the acclaimed film *Trainspotting*

Photograph: Liam Longman/Polygram

or money, was commonplace and in some areas turf wars between rival gangs took place.

In most of the areas studied drugs could be obtained 24 hours a day. In one market users seeking a fix said it took on average about 10 minutes to get their drugs. Stolen mobile phones were frequently used by dealers to take orders for drugs. The phones were recycled among the criminal fraternity to avoid detection by the police.

In poor, multi-ethnic, inner-city areas the white, Asian, and West Indian dealers competed to provide narcotics, which often led to violence.

Even apparently rich areas suffered from the blight of drug abuse. In one area the researchers noted: "Buyers commented that this was a pleasant area in which to shop; they would sometimes buy drugs while doing their weekly shopping or sit and have a coffee while waiting for a seller. The stalls, shops and people are also provided opportunities for shoplifting and selling goods."

In this cosmopolitan area heroin was available in Portuguese cafes, cannabis from street vendors, crack from West Indians, and pharmaceuticals from a chemist.

Among the recommendations were calls to tighten up controls over private prescriptions and pharmacy dispensing, more use of surveillance cameras, increase the police practice of monitoring drug dealer's mobile telephones, and make more use of surveillance operations. Driving prostitutes off the streets may also help in lowering the demand for drugs.

## Official report lifts lid on £600m drugs market

## THE INNER CITY

A mixture of luxury housing, poor council estates, street markets, restaurants. Drugs available from West Indian dealers and street vendors. Buyers "would sometimes buy drugs while doing their weekly shopping". Drugs: Heroin, cannabis, crack, and prescribed drugs such as methadone.

## THE DOCTOR'S SURGERY

Some doctors make "large sums of money easily by issuing repeat prescriptions on a weekly basis to dependent drug users. The weekly consultation fee is usually £25. Pharmacists often allow users credit." Drugs: Injectable methadone, amphetamines and tranquillisers.

## THE STREETS

Poor working-class area, with mix of white and Asian and black. "Contacting sellers via their mobile phones was the norm. Some buyers had up to 10 or more sellers' mobile phone numbers. Most phones were cloned or stolen." Drugs: Heroin and crack among whites and second generation Bangladeshis; also ecstasy, LSD and temazepam.

## THE RAILWAY STATION

Train station (believed to be King's Cross), where prostitutes and street drinkers congregate. Buyers and sellers come from all parts of city. 24-hour market. Drugs usually bought within 10 minutes of arriving at market. Drugs: Heroin, crack, and some amphetamines, ecstasy, temazepam and cannabis.

## THE PUBS AND CLUBS

Vibrant street culture based on pubs and clubs. Predominately white buyers who are based around entrance to underground station. Prostitutes spent up to £2,000 a week on drugs. Drugs: Heroin from Italian dealers and crack cocaine from Afro-Caribbeans. Cannabis for casual users and tourists.

## Labour's warning of crime wave

The spectre of increased urban lawlessness will be raised today by shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown, writes Anthony Bevins.

Although the Government was able to take comfort from a fall in unemployment yesterday, it faced a Bank of England challenge on interest rates and the Wirral South by-election campaign was dominated by Unilever's warning on European Monetary Union.

Mr Brown will warn today that "The re-election of the Tories would risk the creation of a fifth-term underclass that would take us down the road of America, with no-work and no-go inner city areas plagued by lawlessness."

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Business, page 6

how drugs, sleeping tablets and prescribed medicines are illegally obtained via a clandestine web of contacts. Dealers go to extraordinary means to protect themselves from the police and complex relationships are established between the traffickers and clients. The findings are believed to mirror other large cities in Britain, where law enforcement officers and drug workers have conceded that drug abuse is continuing to spiral out of control.

The study, by the Police Research Group, focuses on the dealing of pharmaceutical medicines and Class

## Blair was alerted to Doncaster shenanigans 18 months ago

Christian Wolmar  
Westminster Correspondent

Tony Blair was alerted to widespread abuses among the ruling Labour clique on Doncaster council almost 18 months ago.

A former councillor, Ron Rose, received no reply to the letter which was delivered to Mr Blair by Tony Booth, the Labour Party leader's actor father-in-law and a friend of Mr Rose.

Mr Rose was told that the letter had been passed to officials at party headquarters. He wrote again last month, outlining the way in which the Mining Community Group, a small group of leading councillors, "meets in secret to dispense patronage and favours".

Mr Booth said last night: "Tony Blair read the letter and passed it on to be dealt with by Labour Party officials."

On Tuesday, *The Independent* revealed that some members of the ruling Labour group in Doncaster had flown around the world and gone on drunken binges at the expense of council taxpayers.

Mr Rose's letters describe several similar events and provide evidence of widespread misbehaviour by councillors. His second letter says: "Doncaster is a can of worms for the party", and he goes on to make allegations against a number of senior members.

Mr Rose, a playwright who wrote a BBC TV series, *Love and Reason*, about a corrupt local council, fell foul of the Mining Community Group when he was a councillor between 1986 and 1990. The second letter addressed to Mr Blair describes a series of events over the past 15 years during which the council was allegedly run by a cabal.

Sally Morgan, one of Mr Blair's aides, telephoned Mr Rose to say that she was dealing with the matter.

Mr Rose, who was suspended from the party after writing a letter to the local paper about the Mining Community Group, says he was the victim of a "vendetta because of my fight against corruption on the council." He is seeking "a commitment from the party for an independent and properly qualified investigation into Doncaster District Labour Party".

The letter to Mr Blair goes on: "The Mining Community Group still meets in secret to dispense patronage and favours".

Mr Rose's first letter to the Labour leader in October 1995 also refers to allegations of "systematic corruption that is endemic within the Doncaster Labour Group". He said: "The

main weapon to be used was the payment of NUM members to attend meetings to back NUM motions and nominees". The system was later "hijacked to take over the local council", according to Mr Rose.

Mr Rose said last night: "I



wrote to Tony Blair because I know we now have someone in the leader's office who is prepared to tackle this type of issue among local Labour parties. Ms Morgan was very sympathetic and said she would be coming back to me."

On Tuesday night, one of the Labour councillors who had gone on several trips abroad at the council's expense, Tony Sellars, won his third ward nomination for the Don Valley seat which is currently vacant following the death of Martin Redmond.

Mr Sellars has so far won all three ward nominations. The party's National Executive Committee will be meeting next Monday to interview the candidates and decide on a shortlist, which will be voted on next month by local Labour Party members.

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## QUICKLY

## OJ offered deal

Fred Goldman, the father of Ronald Goldman, who was killed with OJ Simpson's wife Nicole, offered to give up all claims on the \$25m punitive damages awarded against Mr Simpson if the footballer signed a detailed confession to be broadcast and published across the United States. Page 2

## Labour censure

A Labour censure motion against the Agriculture Minister Douglas Hogg is to be tabled for Commons debate on Monday, adding to the pre-election pressure on the government. If the motion is carried Mr Hogg would be forced to resign, and Labour could put down a confidence motion.

## Prison officer found

The body of the missing White-moor prison officer Peter Curran was found in a car dragged from a canal in Cambridgeshire. He vanished in March 1994, two days after being suspended for smuggling toiletries into jail. He was also linked to the escape of IRA prisoners. Page 4

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## news

## significant shorts

## Seven are charged over college fraud inquiry

Six people have been charged with conspiracy to defraud a Birmingham college following an investigation into alleged phantom courses. A seventh person has been charged with forgery in connection with the two-year police inquiry into the running of community courses on behalf of Bournville College of Further Education. Detectives from the West Midlands Police Fraud Squad charged the four men and three women, who all come from the Birmingham area, within the last fortnight. They will appear before magistrates later this month.

The police investigation centred on courses run on behalf of Bournville College for members of Birmingham's Asian community. They included Islamic studies, sewing and English language for women. The college funded the programmes but franchised out the teaching to four local training provider organisations. Police were called in to January 1995 following claims that some courses had never taken place and that students reported to be on the roll did not exist.

Lucy Ward

## Irish suicides on the increase

The Irish Republic's suicide rate is the fastest-rising in Europe, according to a report published yesterday. But Ireland is still near the bottom of Europe's suicide "league table", according to the *Irish Medical Journal*, which gave depression and alcoholism as the chief reasons for Irish people killing themselves.

The journal's report, *Psychiatric and Social Background to Suicide*, said the people most at risk from taking their own lives in Ireland were those under the age of 30. The survey indicated that until the early 1980s, 90 per cent of Irish suicides were attributed to mental illness, but since that time crime, drugs problems and changes in family structures had led to a range of new causes.

## Safe seat for Labour frontbencher

The last Labour frontbench MP left without a constituency at the general election is to fight for a safe seat vacated at the last minute by a 71-year-old left-winger. Bryan Davies, the party's higher education spokesman, will take part in a truncated selection battle in Newport West, South Wales, where Roy Hughes announced his intention to retire on Tuesday. Mr Hughes' decision has also sparked rumours that Alan Howarth, the former Tory minister who defected to Labour, could be given the seat. However, members will be given the chance to vote in a ballot and would be unlikely to choose him. Mr Davies' Oldham constituency disappeared in boundary changes.

Fran Abrams

## Forsyth backs Dunblane plea

Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, last night added his voice to an appeal by the Dunblane parents for privacy on the anniversary of the massacre. The parents and relatives of the victims of the tragedy have asked for the media to stay away from the town on 13 March. They have also asked for a "simple candlelit gesture" to mark the day, ending speculation that an emotional public memorial service will be held. Mr Forsyth (left), who is the local MP for Dunblane, said last night: "The children and their teacher will never be forgotten and will be in everyone's thoughts on 13 March. It would be



wooden if the media respected the wishes of the families for peace and privacy on that day. Earlier, in a statement, the parents said: "Thursday March 13 will mark the first anniversary of the deaths of our children and their teacher at Dunblane Primary School. This will be a very emotional day for us and for the rest of Dunblane. We have decided that this must be a day free from media attention, during which we will remember our loved ones in our own personal way. We do not wish there to be any public event on the anniversary."

## More homeowners join homeless

An increasing proportion of council and housing association tenants are former home owners who have fallen into arrears on their mortgages and had to sell up. Nearly two-thirds of households offered accommodation by councils or housing associations after being homeowners were classified as homeless after defaulting on their mortgages.

A new survey of tenants by the University of York shows that those moving out of council housing are most often younger, better-off couples. They are being replaced by poor households, often headed by single parents. More than 70 per cent of households accepted as tenants by local authorities or housing associations were headed by people aged between 16 and 29. The study concludes that "a more mobile population and growing concentrations of low income tenants are making it harder to sustain stable communities on council and housing association estates".

David Walker

## Scargill blow as party aide quits

Just weeks before the general election Arthur Scargill's tiny Socialist Labour Party is in disarray after the resignation of its general secretary, Pat Sikorsky, who was responsible for organising the party's election effort has quit, leaving the SLP in crisis. In a letter to Mr Scargill, Mr Sikorsky says that he was unable to combine the general secretaryship with his job as a guard on London Underground.

While Mr Sikorsky denies any differences of opinion, observers of left-wing politics contend that there was a personal and political clash with the autocratic Mr Scargill, who is also president of the National Union of Mineworkers. Mr Sikorsky has returned to London Transport having served three years on the executive of the RMT rail union.

Barrie Clement

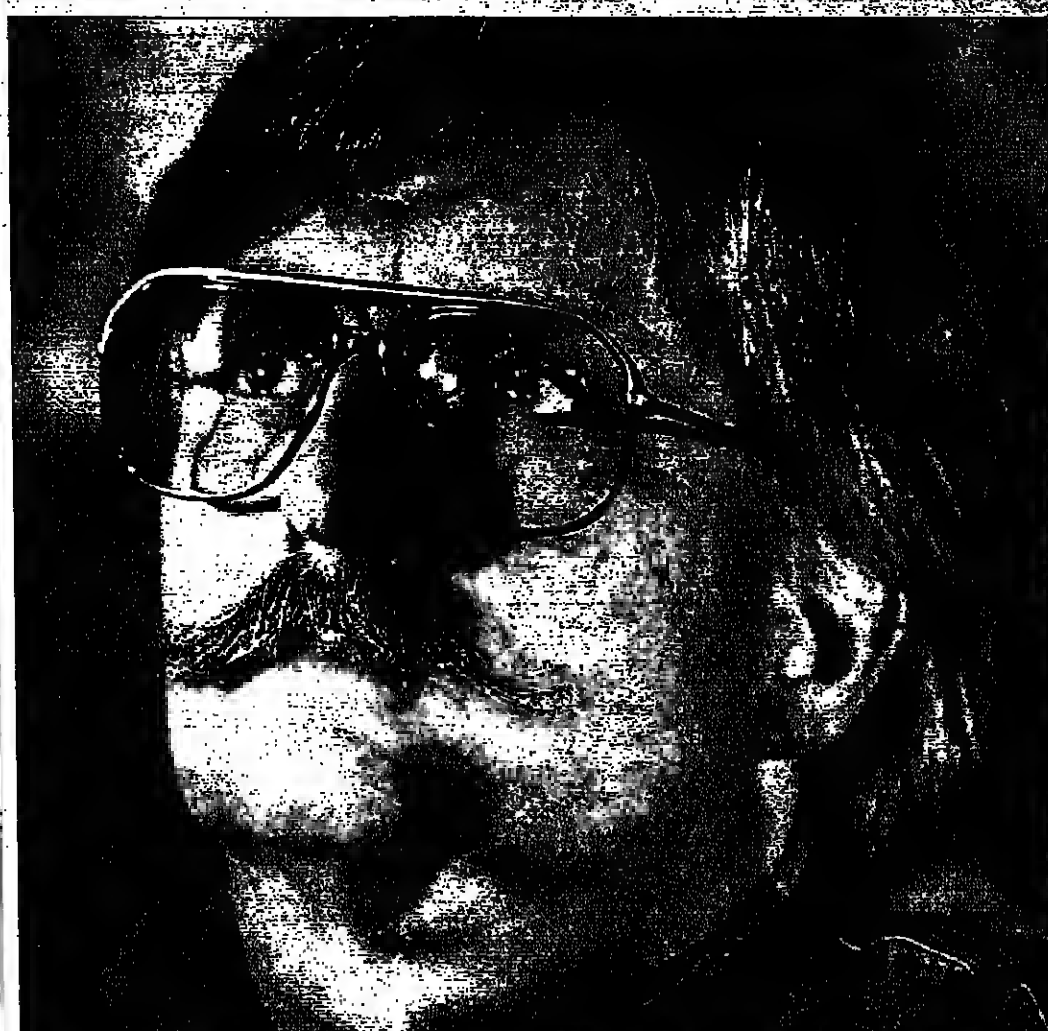
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## people



Fred Goldman: Tireless in his pursuit of Simpson (Photograph: Lee Celano/Reuters)

## Ultimatum to OJ: Confess and it won't cost you a cent

Reigniting the OJ Simpson drama just as it was dropping off the nation's front pages, the father of murdered woman Ronald Goldman offered to drop all financial claims against Simpson yesterday in exchange for a public confession.

"All I ever wanted was justice," said Fred Goldman, who, together with his ex-wife, won \$21m damages against Simpson in a civil law suit which concluded earlier this week. "It's never been an issue about money," Mr Goldman said yesterday as he insisted he did not want to "play games".

But his extraordinary offer promised to raise the public pressure on Simpson since a jury unanimously found him liable in the killings of Ron Goldman and his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson. Almost all the jurors, in interviews since the trial, have said they considered Mr Simpson not just technically responsible for the killings, but "100 per cent" guilty of murder, with the evidence against him far beyond a "reasonable doubt". "Finding O.J. Simpson liable of the murders and acting with oppression and malice was one of the easiest decisions I have ever had to make," said juror Laura Fast-Khazaei, 27, after the trial.

The jurors' comments only added to the widespread public perception that Simpson got away with a grisly double murder. He has been filmed joking and laughing on the golf course this week, and reportedly watched the final verdicts in a club bar with his golfing buddies. His lawyers did not return calls for comment yesterday.

Mr Goldman told the Associated Press yesterday: "If he wanted to sign a confession with all the details of his crime and broadcast it all over the country and publish it all over the nation, I would drop the judgement."

Mr Goldman, the driving force behind the civil suit against Simpson, and his most vociferous public accuser, first raised the idea in an interview with a Dallas-based Christian radio station. He said he had borrowed it in turn from a talk show in Los Angeles, where the right-wing radio hosts have aimed at barrage of attacks on Simpson. Asked if it was likely to happen, he said, "easy to say, easy to do, never going to happen. This person hasn't taken responsibility for any of his actions through his lifetime."

Tim Cornwell, Los Angeles

## Social worker wins award for exposing abuse

Alison Taylor, the former social worker who blew the whistle on the child abuse scandal in North Wales, has won an award from the Campaign for Freedom of Information in recognition of those who have fought to overcome official secrecy.

Mrs Taylor (right) was dismissed from her job as manager of a home in Gwynedd for trying to expose abuse affecting as many as 2,000 children, and refused to accept a financial settlement containing a gagging clause. When she challenged her sacking at an industrial tribunal she won an out-of-court settlement without a secrecy clause, and continued to campaign to get the allegations heard publicly.

She subsequently made approaches to the Welsh Office, the social services inspectorate and others but these were unsuccessful.

In 1991, she took a dossier of allegations from more than 100 children to the police, and a police inquiry later led to the conviction of seven care workers. Finally, a



judicial inquiry was set up and last month began taking evidence about the child abuse.

In recognition of her stand, the Campaign said: "Alison Taylor's refusal to be silenced has been one of the critical factors in finally bringing the scandal into the light." Mrs Taylor is now a successful novelist.

Another of the annual awards, presented last night, went to the Tory MP Quentin Davies, for his efforts to ensure there was no cover-up over the Willeys affair and the Scott report. Jojo Moyes

## Iran refuses to condemn bounty on Rushdie

Iran was angrily criticised by the Government yesterday after it emerged that the bounty on Salman Rushdie's head had been increased from \$2m to \$2.5m, about £1.5m.

Despite official claims that it had nothing to do with increasing the reward for fulfilling the fatwa, or death sentence, on the author, the Foreign Office called upon President Hashemi Rafsanjani to publicly condemn it - something the Iranian leader has so far failed to do.

The reward was increased by the 15 Khordad Foundation, a shadowy organisation which Iran claims is independent.

President Rafsanjani has insisted that the comments do not reflect official policy. His government says it cannot overturn the fatwa but it has given an undertaking not to send agents to kill him.

The Foreign Office said in a statement yesterday that it did not accept the Iranian assurances and demanded more preventative action from President Rafsanjani. Steve Beggan

## Snowdon's lover killed herself while depressed

Lord Snowdon's former lover, Ann Hills, killed herself with a massive overdose of paracetamol which was washed down with wine, an inquest heard yesterday.

The 55-year-old divorced mother-of-two probably committed suicide "on the spur of the moment" because she was depressed at her inability to have long-lasting relationships with men, Westminster Coroner's Court was told.

The body of Mrs Hills was found by her father Elliott Philipp, 81, on the roof of her flat in the West End of London on the afternoon of New Year's Day.

Police were called by friends who were concerned they could not contact Mrs Hills, a freelance journalist. Despite an extensive search they failed to find her body, which was hidden by a chimney. Her father found her body in a kneeling position later that day.

Her brother, Alan Philipp told the inquest Mrs Hills had been divorced since 1981. She had worked hard and was quite successful but although she had many friends, her inability to secure lasting male friendships may have made her concerned about her future happiness, he said.

Coroner Dr Paul Knapman said Mrs Hills had spent Christmas in Norfolk with her ex-husband and sons. Mrs Hills' GP, Professor Patrick Pietroni, said she had spoken of her unhappiness at times but had never exhibited signs of depression and he had never prescribed medication for this.

Pathologist Dr Ian Hill said Mrs Hills had taken "a very substantial overdose of paracetamol" as well as the tranquilliser Temazepam in a therapeutic amount with the equivalent of two glasses of wine.

## briefing

## MOTORING

## Rover supermini crashes to bottom of car survey

The reputation of the Rover 100, shown in Department of Transport tests to be the least "safe" of the superminis, suffered another dent yesterday, when it was voted bottom of its class and described as "old and sad in every way". The damning verdict was given in a national survey by *BBC Top Gear* magazine, which placed the VW Polo top of its category.

There was more bad news for Rover in the coupé class, where the Rover 800 came bottom and was considered "cramped, dated and ugly". The "striking looks" of the Fiat Coupé took it to the top of this category. Top family car was the Fiat Bravo/Brava, while bottom was the Lada Riva. The Ford Mondeo - "simply a good car" to drive - topped the medium car range, with the Daewoo Espero bottom.

## SCIENCE

## Black holes are universal

Evidence of a huge black hole at the heart of a nearby galaxy makes it more likely that the mysterious objects are a common feature of the universe. Astronomers using the Hubble Space Telescope discovered that mass equivalent to about 3.4 million suns was squashed into a region only about one light year across at the centre of the galaxy Messier 32.

M32 is a small companion of the nearest large spiral galaxy to our own Milky Way - the Andromeda galaxy, 2.2 million light years away. Black holes, thought to form when massive stars shrink at the end of their lives, have such a strong gravity that nothing can escape from them, not even light. They distort time and space to such a degree that the normal laws of physics break down.

The findings are published in the science journal *Nature* by researchers from the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.



## WELFARE

## Benefit reform fails to cut costs

Attempts to cut back sharply on the amount of benefit paid to people unable to work through disability or illness have proved much harder than expected, with only half the expected number of claimants being disqualified from benefits, according to a report by the National Audit Office.

The Government had hoped to make savings of £415m, out of spending of around £7.5bn, through introducing the incapacity benefit in April 1995 to replace sickness and invalidity benefits because the new system had tighter rules designed to bar many people from the benefit. However, savings were £135m less than forecast because the Benefits Agency, which administers the benefit, was unable to process as many cases as planned and was unable to disallow as many claims as expected. Christian Wolmar

## SCIENCE

## Is the world getting weirder?

The FT Index rose by 2.9 per cent last year. This may not be good news for investors, for this FT Index is not the usual economic indicator, but the "weirdness index" calculated by the *Fortean Times*, the journal of strange and inexplicable phenomena. For the past few years, it has published an index based on the number of weird stories spotted by their readers in the pages of the world's press. And the figures show that 1996 was 2.9 per cent up on 1995.

The publishers add the reassuring information that the figures reflect an interest in weirdness rather than necessarily weirdness itself. Indeed, were it not for the attacks on farm animals by the Puerto Rican Gnosticker and the discovery of possible life on Mars, the index would scarcely be higher than in the previous year. With Spontaneous Human Combustion going through a relatively damp patch and Swarmings considerably down, the evidence of a general upward trend in weirdness is weak. William Hartston

**THE INDEPENDENT**

**HOLD THE FRONT PAGE**

Today *The Independent* places MEDIA+2, a new section, at the heart of the ever-expanding communications business. As television revolutionises itself, newspapers are in a battle and manipulators and advertisers find ever more potent devices, we will tell you what you need to know, whether you are a bombarded civilian, a media professional or a media wannabe. Monday's *Independent* (rich in media appointments) is an edition you miss at your peril.

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Shape of things to come: Man Ray's 1920s Original Rayogram, set to fetch at least £30,000 at auction in May Photograph: Sotheby's

## Surreal moment as rare Man Ray is found

Matthew Brace

A rare and valuable print by the American artist and photographer Man Ray has been unearthed in an attic, having lain hidden for more than 25 years.

The Man Ray Rayogram - a camera-less photograph taken by placing objects on light-sensitive paper and exposing them to light from above - is inscribed by the photographer on the back and marked "original".

The find has excited Sotheby's, in London, where the photograph and 248 others, including prints by the American landscape photographer Edward Weston, will go to auction on 2 May. The Man Ray alone is expected to fetch upwards of £30,000.

The auctioneers' photographic expert, Philippe Garner, a senior director at Sotheby's, said yesterday that the discovery of the collection was "possibly the most exciting group of photographs to have turned up in this way in the last 30 years".

Man Ray lived in Paris for much of his working life. He was linked to the Dada and Surrealist movements although he was also known as an experimenter and to a large extent, reinvented photography. He died in 1976.

Mr Garner said the collection was put together by Helene Anderson, a German photographer who gathered most of the photographs in the 1920s and 1930s before the sweep of Nazism stemmed much of the free flow of art in Germany.

In 1939 Anderson boxed up her collection and sent it eastwards, out of harm's way, to her parents in Silesia. Later, as the Russians advanced, the boxes were moved again, this time to Frankfurt where Anderson settled until her death in 1971.

"Helene Anderson had an exceptional eye and understanding for the dynamic developments... in photography in Germany and elsewhere during the 20s and 30s and set about building a collection to illustrate the finest achievements of the avant-garde," said Mr Garner.

"When she died, her son knew he was left with a number of boxes but did not know what was inside them. Only recently, 25 years after his mother's death, did he realise he might have something important."

The whole collection is expected to fetch something in the region of £650,000.

## Men's magazines to disappear as WH Smith wipes top shelf clean

Marianne Macdonald  
Media Correspondent

WH Smith, Britain's biggest and most powerful newsagent, is to stop selling "top-shelf" magazines in its high-street shops from next month, it announced yesterday.

A spokeswoman denied the move was prompted by moral concerns, saying it was the result of a review of sales of the 1,500 magazines it stocks.

Penhouse, Playboy and For Women were among the poorest performers. Customers will still be able to order the magazines to arrive within a day or so at the shops, and they would still be sold in WH Smith concessions at stations and airports.

"We have to make a decision about what we have got room for... we try to make room for the ones that sell best," the spokeswoman said. "It's nothing to do with ethics. If it was, then we would have taken them out of all stores."

"Our policy is very much that if people want to read something we make it available. We don't make judgments about what people should and should not read." The review is a regular feature at WH Smith, which has continuously reassessed the performance of titles. Last year, 50 new magazines came on to the market, and its 450 high-street shops have run out of space to display them all.

As a result, the company said yesterday, 269 titles, including the "top-shelf" magazines, would be dropped. The others are mostly specialist or trade titles. "Some of those sold as little as three copies," the spokeswoman said. "The suggestion that the top-shelf are going to disappear is a distortion of what's really going on."

has been being dropped for a period of time - we used to stock a lot more. Those four have hung on, if you like, but they have now slipped to the bottom of the list."

Yesterday different explanations were being offered for WH Smith's move. One is that research has shown customers at its high-street outlets are predominantly women or families in the 25-45 range - not natural readers of such magazines. Others said the move was, in spite of the company's claims,

Monthly circulations	
Playboy	131,074
For Women	60,000
Esquire	107,058
FHM	181,000
Loaded	238,955
Penhouse	33,519
Penhouse Plus	33,000

due to moral considerations. Ruth Corbett, who edits For Women, a monthly Playboy-style magazine aimed at women, said: "I feel very cross about this. It's rather silly in this day and age. It seems they are on some sort of moral crusade."

"They're probably saying there's no demand but we think there's a huge demand for the magazine. We have letters arriving every day asking us where the magazine can be bought."

Ms Corbett added that WH Smith was hypocritical in its attitude. It was happy to stock erotic novels for women, which have been soaring in popularity recently.

"Women are reading those

books on the Tube, which you'd never have seen in the past. But at WH Smith, when it comes to showing pictures of men showing all their bits, rather than just text, they don't like it."

Others speculated that the move was also triggered by the new trend toward heavily sexual, but "respectable" men's magazines such as Loaded and FHM. The trend for laddish titles has seen their circulations soar in the past couple of years.

The Internet also increasingly offers an accessible outlet for soft and hard-core, with services which allow users to watch models stripping on-screen in obedience to typed instructions (and a hefty payment). Soft-core pornography is also available on cable and satellite services.

Carl Snitcher, the chief executive of Paul Raymond Publications, which publishes Playboy, said he was not overly concerned by WH Smith's decision, however, because it would be unlikely to affect circulation.

"We would have preferred it hadn't happened, but it will not have a substantial effect on our magazine because only about 1 per cent of our total sale is through high-street stores."

But Comag, the UK distributors of Playboy, said they were surprised by the magazine was being dropped, because it was now being marketed as a lifestyle title. "If you compare it to FHM or Loaded, there's probably the same amount of nudity in it," a spokeswoman said. "It's even more odd given the huge success of Playboy in southern Ireland, where it launched a year ago after being banned for 36 years. Sales there now make up 45 per cent of total UK sales."



Non-erogenous zone: The reach for titillation draws to a close Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## Stephen Hawking's bet disappears into a black hole

Matthew Brace

Professor Stephen Hawking - regarded by some as one of Albert Einstein's intellectual successors - has lost a six-year-old bet with colleagues.

Hawking made a wager with two professors at the California Institute of Technology that "naked singularities" - variations on a cosmological phenomenon believed to lurk at the hearts of black holes - could not exist. Now it seems they might.

The New York Times reported yesterday that Professor Hawking conceded defeat last week "on a technicality" to fellow physicists John Preskill and Kip Thorne. The stake was \$104 (£100), plus an item of clothing "embroidered with a suitable concessionary

... and for the uninitiated

A singularity is defined as a mathematical point at which space and time are infinitely distorted, where matter is infinitely dense, and where the normal rules of relativistic physics and quantum mechanics break down.

message." Although he could not prove his disbelief in naked singularities, Professor Hawking, the author of the best-selling book A Brief History of Time, proposed his bet at one such meeting in 1991.

Because of its far-reaching theoretical implications, news of the bet spread widely among physicists.

Although no light nor any other kind of signal can escape from black holes, half-dozen or so have been revealed by their gravitational effects on nearby stars. Black holes have also betrayed their presence by sucking in matter from nearby.

Singularities are believed to lurk hidden at the centre of black holes. A naked singularity would be a singularity bereft of a concealing black-hole shell, and therefore visible, in principle, to outside observers.

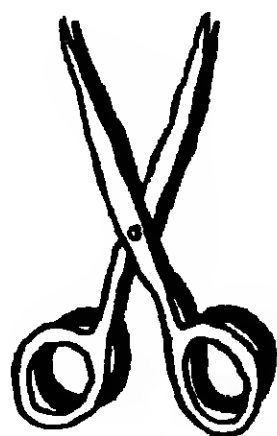
Professors Preskill and Thorne won the bet because recent computer calculations have shown that naked singularities could, in theory, be created as a star collapsed.

Professors Preskill and Thorne won the bet because recent computer calculations have shown that naked singularities could, in theory, be created as a star collapsed.

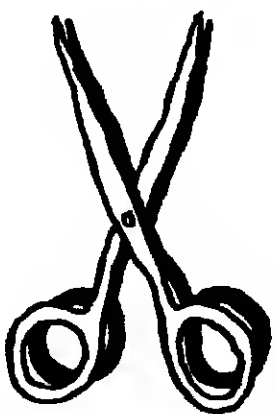
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## news

# Missing jail officer's body found in river

Steve Boggan

The body of the missing White-moor prison officer Peter Curran was found yesterday as speculation grew that he might have been involved in supplying drugs to prisoners.

Police who dragged a car from a waterway in Cambridgeshire confirmed that the badly decomposed remains were Mr Curran's. He vanished in March 1995, two days after being suspended for smuggling toiletries into the prison.

There has been speculation - but no evidence - since his disappearance that he may have been involved in the attempted breakout by five IRA prisoners and a convicted robber from White-moor in September 1994. However, sources close to the jail say they suspect Mr Curran, 38, had been acting as a courier for an outside drugs gang.

The car was pulled from a deep man-made dike Chatteris. A Home Office pathologist conducted a post-mortem ex-

amination yesterday and confirmed that the remains were those of the prison officer.

Mr Curran is the second White-moor officer within a month to be found drowned in such a manner. Marcia Whitehurst, 37, was killed when her car plunged into a river near Wisbech after giving evidence at the trial of the White-moor escapees. The police described her death as a "tragic accident".

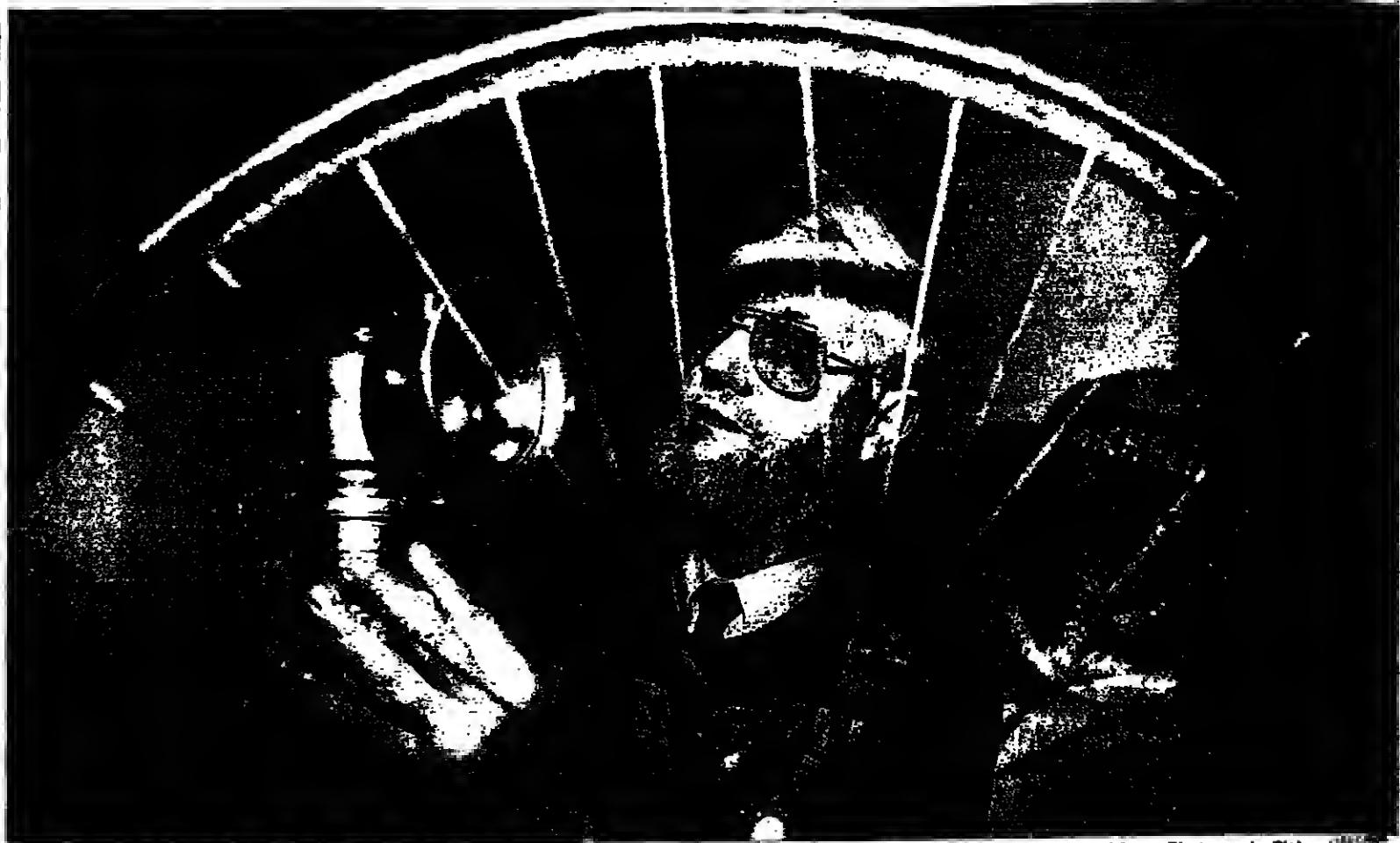
Prison sources are not the only people who believe third parties may have been involved in Mr Curran's death. In the days before he disappeared he told his wife, Christine, that he was afraid because of something he had done at the jail. Then, on a Sunday, he "popped out" without a coat and never came back.

In an interview earlier this month with the *Fenland Citizen* newspaper, Mrs Curran said she believed he went out to meet someone and suggested his disappearance had something to do with his job. He told her about supplying the toiletries hut

"hinted there was something else". Last night, she told the BBC: "I don't believe this was just a road-traffic accident ... I think as I did before that something else was going on here. It is one accident too many."

Mrs Curran said she believed her husband was about to "blow the whistle" - a belief that tallies with prison officers' opinions. One source said: "They had him for the toiletries, but they believed there was alcohol involved and possibly worse. They believed he was prepared to give a statement, but that could be what got him killed."

Mark Freeman of the Prison Officers' Association, said staff at the jail had been outraged by allegations made by Michael Mansfield QC, who represented one of the IRA prisoners, that staff had colluded with the escapees. "A police investigation is being carried out and they will no doubt examine the links between the two deaths of the officers. But it is far too early to say what this may be," he said.



Wheels of time: David Higman, of the National Bicycle Exhibition which opens at Llandrindod Wells in March, with a 1934 lamp. Photograph: Richard B. Jones

## Husband gets life for family killing

Patricia Wynn Davies  
Legal Affairs Editor

The husband of murdered teacher Eve Howells must carry the major burden of blame for the killing, a judge said yesterday as he jailed him for life and ordered his two sons to indefinite detention at Her Majesty's Pleasure.

David Howells, 48, was not present when his wife was killed but Mr Justice Allott condemned him as the instigator of the crime, and his recommendation to the Home Secretary on the minimum jail term to be served would take account of that. Recommendations on the boys would reflect that Glenn, 17, who repeatedly struck his mother with a hammer, was the actual killer. John, 16, who disposed of the murder weapon and his brother's bloodstained clothes, had an "active if less crucial" role, the judge said.

A jury decided on Tuesday that the father and sons had plotted the killing together after the boys suffered years of abuse from the history and religious affairs teacher. Mr Justice Allott then took the unusual course of giving the three 24 hours to confess the exact roles they had played before deciding what tariffs to recommend. "I don't know the whole truth," he said.

The period of reflection resulted in Glenn Howells admitting for the first time that his father had been involved in discussions about killing his mother in a mock burglary - but David Howells persisted in denying active involvement.

Gary Burrell QC, acting for Glenn, told the court: "The reality is that none of us will ever know the full story." But Glenn should be sentenced on the basis that the killing, in August 1995, "would never have taken place without David Howells' prior knowledge, and without some, implicit at least, encouragement."

Simon Hawkesworth QC, counsel for David Howells, said Mr Howells denied active complicity in any plan to kill his wife. "He does accept, as he must, that he failed to act to prevent this tragedy and that it was in his power to do so. To that extent he recognises that in his role as father, he failed his sons and there's a heavy moral responsibility."

But the judge told him that he had led his sons into doing what they did. "There cannot be anything more vile than to get your sons to kill their mother, unless it can be to confront cheerfully their long detention while you went free."

"Yours is by far the greatest culpability and I shall reflect that in my recommendation." The father was playing a pish darts match when the murder was carried out, enabling him to put forward an alibi defence in court.

Aiden Marran QC, acting for John, said the younger son had been damaged by the bizarre behaviour of his mother, but there was also a sinister element - his father. John's increasing isolation and desolation had led him to rely and depend more and more heavily on his father.

Mr Marran called a consultant forensic psychiatrist, Dr Peter Wood, who told the court that John had become significantly behaviourally disturbed by his mother's behaviour and "chronically dependent" on his brother and father.

From the time John was 10, a fantasy had begun of how the boys might achieve a "life without mum", and they began to think about causing her death. The ideas had become firmer as time went on.

"In a positive way, and later more actively, his father did not discourage him and later probably encouraged him to find a radical solution to their problems. It was an unbalanced situation and as the youngest member of the family, John was very vulnerable," Dr Wood said.

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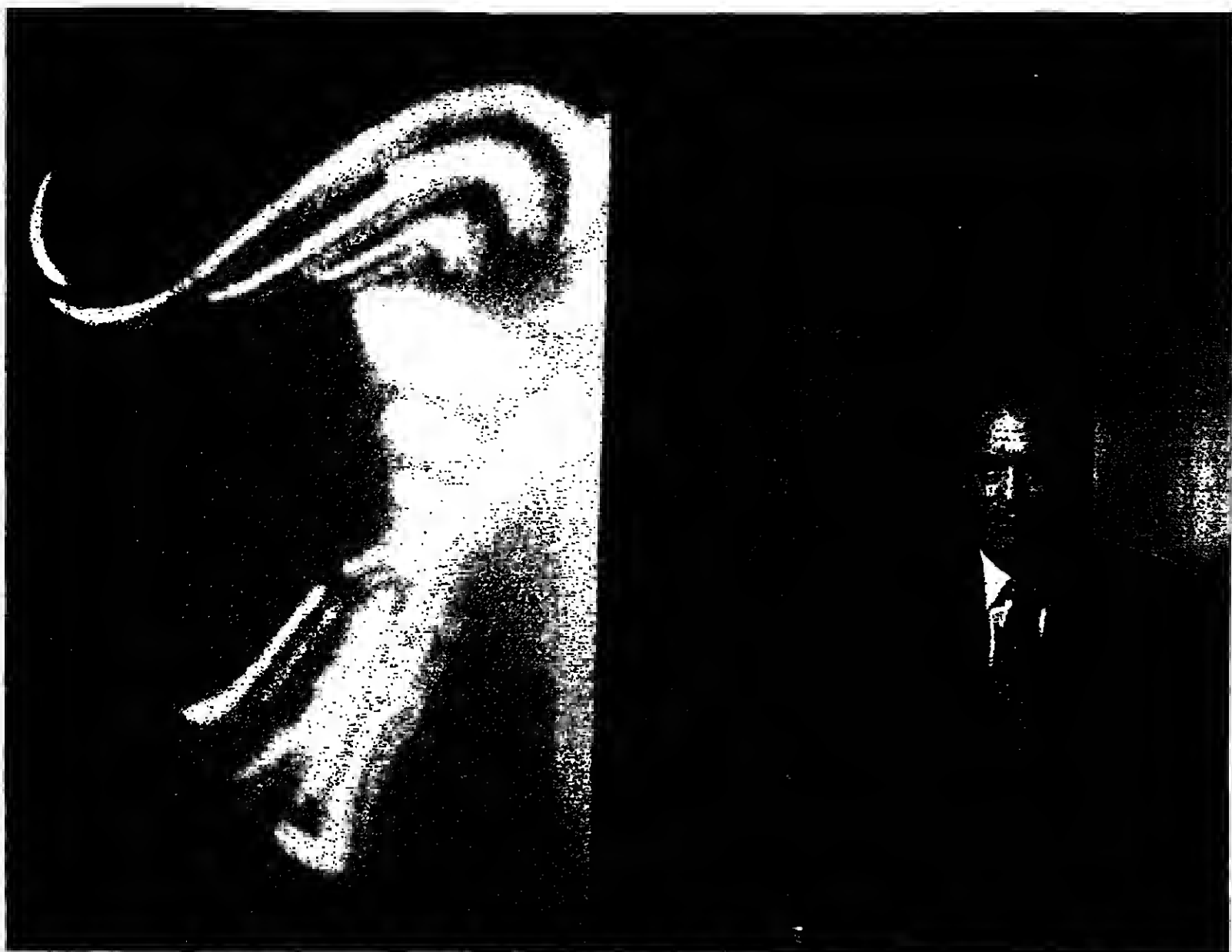
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1. The first part of the document is a letter from the author to the reader, dated 1945. The letter is written in a personal, conversational style. It begins with a greeting and then discusses the author's experiences during the war. The author mentions that he was a member of the United States Army and that he served in the Pacific. He describes the conditions of war and the impact it had on him. The letter ends with a closing and a signature.





Keeping council: The Conservative Party chairman, Brian Mawhinney, at a party news conference in London yesterday where he refused to be drawn on a date for the general election. "Whenever the Prime Minister announces a date, we will be ready," Dr Mawhinney said. Photograph: Tom Piston

## Brown warns of no-work ghettos under Tories

Anthony Bevins and Diane Coyle

The spread of lawless, inner-city ghettos would be threatened by the re-election of the Tories for a fifth term, shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown will warn today.

In a speech concentrating on the positive action Labour would take to get people back into work, and reform the welfare state, Mr Brown will spell out the dangers of another election victory for John Major.

Against a background of yesterday's further fall in unemployment, he will argue that the figures disguise the fact that one-fifth of all non-pensioner households have no one in work – and that the Tories propose no action to tackle that problem.

"The danger is that the re-election of the Tories would risk the creation of a fifth-term underclass that would take us down the road of America, with no-work and no-go inner city areas plagued by lawlessness," Mr Brown will say.

The warning echoes similar predictions from senior Tories, including the Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, who

wrote 10 years ago in his book, *Where There's a Will*: "Against a background of high unemployment, the invitation to crime becomes more appealing. Idleness becomes a resentment that gives crime an indefensible normality."

Anticipating more Conservative attacks on the windfall tax – the £5bn-plus levy on the excess profits of privatised utilities, Labour last night published the legal opinion that it was watertight.

The opinion, signed by Michael Beloff QC, said there could be no challenge under domestic law; it should not attract a challenge under European law, "but, if it did, such challenge would fail", and would withstand any challenge under the European Convention of Human Rights.

Yesterday's good news on unemployment was mitigated by another Bank of England swipe at the reluctance of the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, to raise interest rates – and Opposition endorsement of the warning from Niall FitzGerald, chairman of Unilever, that future United Kingdom investment could be at risk if Britain opted out

of European monetary union.

As Unilever and its subsidiaries are the largest corporate employers in Wirral South, the by-election battleground, Mr FitzGerald's warning could not have come at a more politically sensitive moment – a point aggravated by the fact that the Chancellor was campaigning in the constituency yesterday.

But the warning also coincided with publication of the Bank of England's quarterly Inflation Report, in which Mervyn King, the Bank's chief economist, said: "There should be a rise in interest rates now. The longer you delay, the more interest rates will have to go up."

News of a 68,700 drop in the number of unemployment benefit claimants last month, taking the jobless rate down to 6.5 per cent, and a faster pace of earnings growth, added weight to the Bank's claim that the economy was expanding too rapidly. However, the combination of the political timetable and mixed signals on the economy means interest rates will almost certainly not rise ahead of the election.

Bank pressure on Clarke, page 20

## LibDems in confusion over bonus

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

Liberal Democrat plans for a double Christmas pension in December to replace the "misery" £10 Christmas bonus were thrown into disarray last night when officials denied it was a manifesto pledge.

The party's social security spokeswoman, Liz Lynne, said the Christmas bonus was "an insult which we want to redress by paying a double pension in the first week of December."

But within minutes of publishing a policy document on the elderly saying it was Liberal Democrat policy to give pensioners a double pension in the first week of December, officials were stressing it was not a commitment.

"It is still in the running to get into the manifesto but we are having a costing exercise. Whether it will get in, we cannot say yet," said an official.

Officials also had to correct Ms Lynne's figures after she told a Westminster news conference it would cost £580m to implement. The real estimated net cost was £440m, after deducting the cost of the £10 bonus, which would be scrapped.

The confusion over Ms Lynne's apparent pledge to pensioners, repeated on BBC radio, follows strains between the Rochdale MP and the Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, over his strategy for moving closer to Labour, which she opposes. Officials

denied the launch of the policy document, *A Fair Deal for Older People*, was being used as a lever to force a higher spending policy on the Liberal Democrat leadership.

Harriet Harman, the Labour spokeswoman on social security, set out Labour's alternative with a boost to occupational pensions, through "stakeholder pensions".

It came as the Treasury last night was accused by Labour of drafting slap-dash legislation on the budget in an attempt to close tax loopholes in the run-up to the general election.

After securing a series of concessions from Philip Oppenheim, the Exchequer Secretary, Dawn Primarolo, the Labour spokeswoman said: "The wheels are falling off the Finance Bill and it shows that the Bill was badly drafted."

Alistair Darling, the Treasury spokesman who is leading for Labour on the Bill, said many of the problems arose from a note sent to Customs and Excise by William Waldegrave, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, seeking suggestions on increasing the tax revenue.

"The call went out and we have seen the unintended consequences of some of the measures they have introduced. This Finance Bill looks as if it was done on the hoof."

The Government insisted it was normal to introduce amendments after consultation, but Labour said the changes went beyond "tidying up" measures.

## Queen approves sex Bill debate

Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

The Queen has given her consent for peers to debate a proposal that royal daughters as well as sons should be able to succeed to the throne.

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare put forward the motion, which would allow a future eldest child of Prince William to be able to inherit the crown regardless of its gender. The Lord Steward of the Household, crossbencher Viscount Ridley, announced the decision at the start of business in the Lords yesterday, though Lord Archer was not in the House.

However, there is too little parliamentary time left before the general election for the Throne Bill to stand a chance of becoming law.

It is opposed by a number of peers, including the Queen's former private secretary, Lord Charteris of Annisfield. When Lord Archer asked the Lords to request the Queen's consent in December, they took the rare

step of contesting his move but it was approved by 74 votes to 53.

A similar measure to allow eldest children, regardless of gender, to inherit peerages was blocked in December 1994.

The Queen's consent for Lord Archer's Bill to be debated does not necessarily indicate Royal support for the measure, but the Palace is understood to prefer that such a far-reaching change should be the result of a government Bill rather than backbench legislation.

"The Lords' convention is to give all Bills, whether government or backbench, a formal first reading and an unopposed second reading and not to block backbench measures from progressing to the Commons."

If opponents of Lord Archer's Bill do force a vote during the measure's later stages in the Lords, the government and opposition front benches are likely to abstain, while allowing their peers a free vote.

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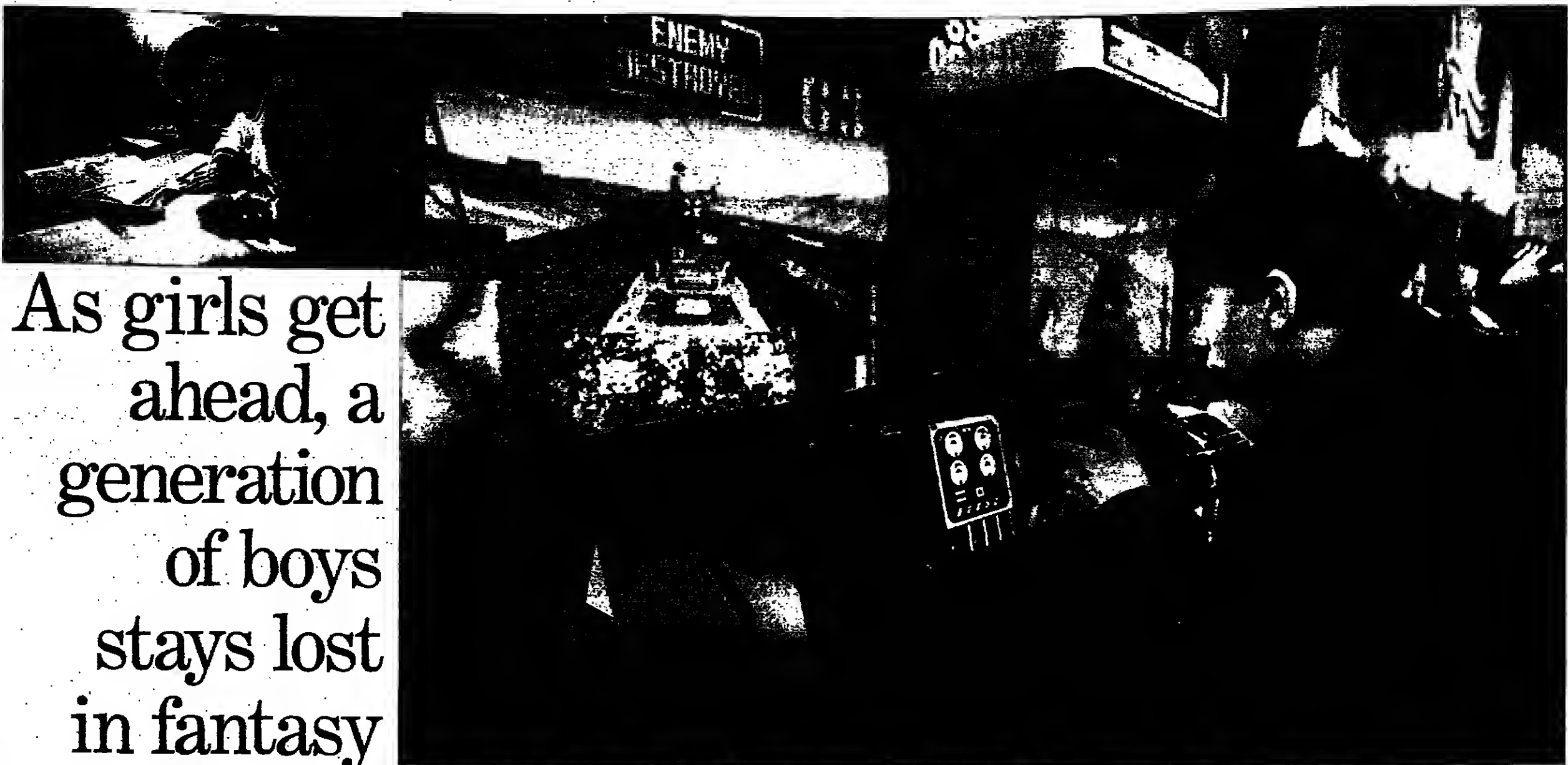
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## As girls get ahead, a generation of boys stays lost in fantasy

Ages of reason: By the age of 14 many boys are living in a fantasy world of computer games, while girls have a grasp on reality, researchers say

Photograph: Nicola Kurz

Glenda Cooper  
Social Affairs Correspondent

Today's boys are taking refuge in a fantasy world of computer games and violent films and are becoming increasingly reluctant to leave it, according to new research.

Market researchers say society is in danger of creating a generation of "lost boys" whose visions for the future are still clouded in fantasy compared with the practical aspirations of their female peers.

Even by the age of 14, many boys were still saying that their chosen career would be in football, "to enjoy myself and earn lots of money". Or they wanted to be fighter pilots. "I just want to fly a plane". In comparison, girls were intending to be vets, teachers or childcare workers.

The researchers, from the company ChildWise, inter-

viewed 1,014 boys and girls aged between five and fourteen. They felt that the boys had "comparatively little grasp of the realities of the employment world and had largely impracticable notions about jobs". In spite of this, 38 per cent of boys of 13-14 named unemployment as their greatest fear.

Girls have also become more concerned about unemployment than they were two years ago. Those questioned felt they no longer had a choice between a career and having a baby but must earn their own living as well as bring up a family.

While girls surge ahead in the world of education, boys appear less interested in their lessons, watching far more television, especially satellite channels, and playing computer games.

It was found that violent and 18-rated films were seen at an early age. As many as one in ten

boys aged five and six had watched the 18-rated film *Alien 3* and by the age of 13 or 14, 64 per cent of boys had seen it, compared with only 45 per cent of girls. *Judge Dredd*, which

**Sex and nudity in films seem to offend them much more than images of violence**

contains graphic violence, had been watched by 43 per cent of 13- to 14-year-old boys, compared with 19 per cent of girls of the same age.

Boys said they watched 18-rated films not because they were specifically interested in the subject matter but because they were violent and provided a quick thrill. Sex and nudity were often seen as more offensive than violence, described as the sort of images "we shouldn't watch". In each age group, the proportion of boys to girls who had watched rated films was two or three to one.

Rosemary Duff, associate director of ChildWise, said that the children supported a ratings system, but also thought they were mature enough to cope with the films. "In principle, they think a ratings system is a good idea, but they do not feel that they need it for themselves," she said.

Computer games which include violence, such as *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat*, are also popular. But boys draw a distinction between violence in

films and computer games: graphics are deemed unreal and consequently are not as frightening.

Nine out of ten children now have a computer or a games machine at home. But while 44 per cent of the 9- to 10-year-old boys had a computer in their own room, only three in ten girls had. Boys were more likely to talk about games on their computer while girls mentioned learning programmes.

Ms Duff said that watching so many violent films did not appear to make the boys violent. However, their addiction to television and games showed their avoidance of reality. "They are flying fantasy kites. They don't expect to get what they want," she said. "Essentially, they are deferring growing up."

ChildWise Monitor 96/97 can be obtained from ChildWise, 0171 287 3565; £495.

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## Call of the wolf chills Scotland

Stephen Goodwin  
Heritage Correspondent

Wilderness campaigners who want the howl of the wolf to be heard again in the highlands of Scotland were yesterday warned of the high price that might have to be paid in sheep's lives and lawsuits.

The last wolf in Scotland was killed in 1746 but in recent years some conservationists have argued that not only should wild landscapes be protected but that extinct species should be reintroduced. The Government is bound by a European Union directive to consider the possibility.

But writing in the latest issue of *The Field*, clan chief Willy Newlands criticises "suburban dinner-party conservationists" who want to foist their English enthusiasms on to Scottish farmers. "The eerie howling of a wolf pack on a frosty night could be a dramatic restoration of one of the natural wonders of the Highlands, but the price to be paid would be high," writes Mr Newlands.



Wolves would do little to control deer, preferring to hunt the abundant sheep or ponies, he argues. Organisations who set wolves free could also face expensive lawsuits if tourists were frightened away or if anyone were to be mauled. In the southern Alps, French farmers are demanding the destruction of reintroduced wolf packs which have killed nearly 500 sheep in one season.

Simon Pepper, head of the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) in Scotland, accepts that any reintroduction of the wolf, even on islands, is decades away. "Long term it is an exciting vision, but we do not see it as a practical proposition yet. Issues to do with the interaction with livestock and people would have to be resolved."

WWF's first candidate for reintroduction to the wild in Scotland would probably be the beaver, which is harmless. The European beaver does not even gnaw down trees in the cartoon manner of its American cousin.

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## news

## First the house, then the Bentley; now Lloyd-Webber empties the cellar

The composer Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber could be £2m richer if thousands of bottles of wine from his collection sell at auction in London.

He has collected wine for decades and Sotheby's has 18,000 bottles from the cellars of his homes in England and France to sell on 20 May. Serena Sutcliffe, head of Sotheby's International Wine Department, called it "the greatest single wine collection ever to appear at auction... it represents the wine-lover's dream cellar."

Every bottle fell into the category of being the world's most desirable wine, she said. Most of it is French, with a concentration on Burgundy and Bordeaux, as well as champagnes from Krug, Dom Perignon and Bollinger.

The sale includes 10 cases of Château Latour 1982 and 24 cases of Margaux 1982. 10 bottles of 1945 Château Lafite and six bottles of Château Margaux from 1900.

Collectors will pay huge prices for the correct vintage and records are frequently set.

Books and television

programmes on wine have helped create a collectors' market.

■ In September, a bottle of Château d'Yquem 1865, a sweet white French wine, sold at Sotheby's for £5,280.

■ Prices of the top clarets have rocketed in the past two or three years, but some experts say the boom may not continue for much longer.

■ The influence of various wine writers has helped push up the value of some wines and wealthy Far Eastern and Middle Eastern investors have come into the market in a big way recently.

■ One Far Eastern wine-lover spent a total of £68,530 on bottles of a celebrated claret called Château Le Pin at Christie's in London in April. He was buying them to drink.

■ Experts warn: "Wine is not an advisable investment unless you are very clued up on the subject. If you don't know what you are doing, you can really come unstuck. It is very easy to get ripped off in the wine business."

■ Generally speaking, the older the wine, the higher the risk.



Golden harvest: Serena Sutcliffe, of Sotheby's, with a bottle of Château d'Yquem 1900 from the Lloyd Webber collection, to be auctioned in May

Photograph: John Voos

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## Vegetative patients should die, say doctors

Liz Hunt  
Health Editor

The overwhelming majority of doctors who treat patients in the deep, coma-like state known as persistent vegetative state (PVS), believe that treatment should be withheld in some circumstances to allow patients to die.

In the first comprehensive survey of more than 1,000 neurologists, neurosurgeons and other specialists, there was more than 90 per cent support for not treating acute infections and other life-threatening conditions in PVS patients where "appropriate."

The survey, by the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics at King's College London, reveals widespread discrepancies in hospital policy and in the medical care of PVS patients.

The researchers call on the Government to act urgently to collate information on PVS patients in UK hospitals, how they are treated and by whom, and to formalise guidelines on their care.

Almost 75 per cent of doctors surveyed said it can "sometimes" be appropriate to withdraw artificial feeding and hydration from such patients. Contrary to advice given by the British Medical Association, a majority of doctors said that withdrawal of artificial nutrition and hydration could be considered within a year of PVS diagnosis.

More than a third said it would be appropriate to consider withdrawal after the patient had been in PVS for six months.

The findings of the survey conflict with BMA advice that treatment-limiting decisions should not be considered until the patient has been in PVS for a year or more.

PVS is used to describe patients with severe brain damage who spend time awake and asleep; who show no meaningful response to things around

them, and whose movements and reactions are reflex. They can breathe on their own but must have to be fed through a tube.

It is estimated that there are between 1,000 and 1,500 PVS patients in the UK, and since the 1993 High Court case of Hillsborough victim, Tony Bland, the condition has been the focus of much public debate.

There have now been nine cases in England since Bland, when the courts have approved withdrawal of life-sustaining measures from PVS patients. The most controversial cases have centred on withdrawal of food and water.

There has also been public concern about misdiagnosis of PVS after a study published last year found that 17 patients diagnosed as PVS were in fact aware of themselves and their surroundings, and could communicate in limited ways with their carers and families.

This raises the possibility that people from whom treatment, food and water were withdrawn, and allowed to die, were not in PVS.

The survey, which attracted 1,027 respondents also found that three-quarters disagreed with court involvement in PVS cases, although a similar proportion agreed with the Bland decision to allow him to die.

However, doctors still appear reluctant to give weight to an advance directive made by patients in decisions about withdrawing artificial nutrition and hydration, the survey revealed.

Pat Walsh, acting director of the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics said: "There is a pressing need for further research to unpack the implicit moral reasoning behind what doctors are doing."

■ Doctors' views on the management of patients in persistent vegetative state (PVS): a UK study, is available from the Centre of Medical Law and Ethics, King's College, London. Tel: 0171 873 2382.

## DAILY POEM

### Cracks

By Ruth Biddood

In Penylan Road, Dinas Road, Pendref, pavements are cracking. People there grumble, but are not much perturbed at this little encroachment of chaos. Washing cars, weeding paths, they cherish as long as they may, all controllable things, and go on making small memories.

Pavements are cracking. The lines form a pattern like rivers or roads on maps. Here and there through the cracks creep small plants, embellishments such as old cartographers added in corners and margins - pygmy beasts, fruit, cherubs, flowers, to complement their hazardous projections with forms of tenacious life.

"Cracks" is from Ruth Biddood's recent volume, *The Fluent Moment* (Serena). Born in Glamorgan in 1923, she now lives in Powys and has published seven poetry collections. *The Fluent Moment* costs £5.95 from Serena at Poetry Wales Press Ltd., First Floor, 2 Wyndham Street, Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan CF31 1EF.

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# League tables lost on half of parents

Judith Judd  
Education Editor

Half the parents of secondary school children have either not seen examination league tables or have not understood them, according to new government-funded research published yesterday.

The revelation in a three-year study comes the day after the Prime Minister announced more league tables - this time for seven- and fourteen-year-olds - as part of the Conservatives' vote-winning strategy for the general election.

Research from the Economic and Social Research Council looked at how parents of 231 pupils chose state and private

as many are confused about what league tables are supposed to represent.

Her research, carried out with Professor Miriam David of South Bank University, shows that parents have a hierarchy of schools, based on a wish to keep their pupils safe from undesirable influences.

"Some types of school are perceived to be a safe option - for example, private, selective, girls' or church schools - while others imply greater risk," the report says. The research found that parents saw working-class boys as the main social threat. The child's happiness comes top of the list of reasons for choosing a school among parents of both primary and secondary pupils, although parental notions of happiness differ.

One mother who had put down her son's name before birth at the famous public school attended by his father and grandfather said that the two most important factors affecting her choice were her son's happiness and that the school should suit his needs.

Fathers take the responsibility for choosing a primary school in only 3 per cent of cases, although those with children attending private schools are more likely to be involved.

About 65 per cent of parents of children at private schools said that class size had been important in choosing a school.

The most startling contrast between state and private schools was found in homework. Only 4 per cent of children at state primary schools had more than 30 minutes homework a night while all those at private primary schools did.

But, the study suggests, the lighter homework demands in state schools may have a positive spin-off: children at state primaries were more likely than their private-school counterparts to write stories at home.

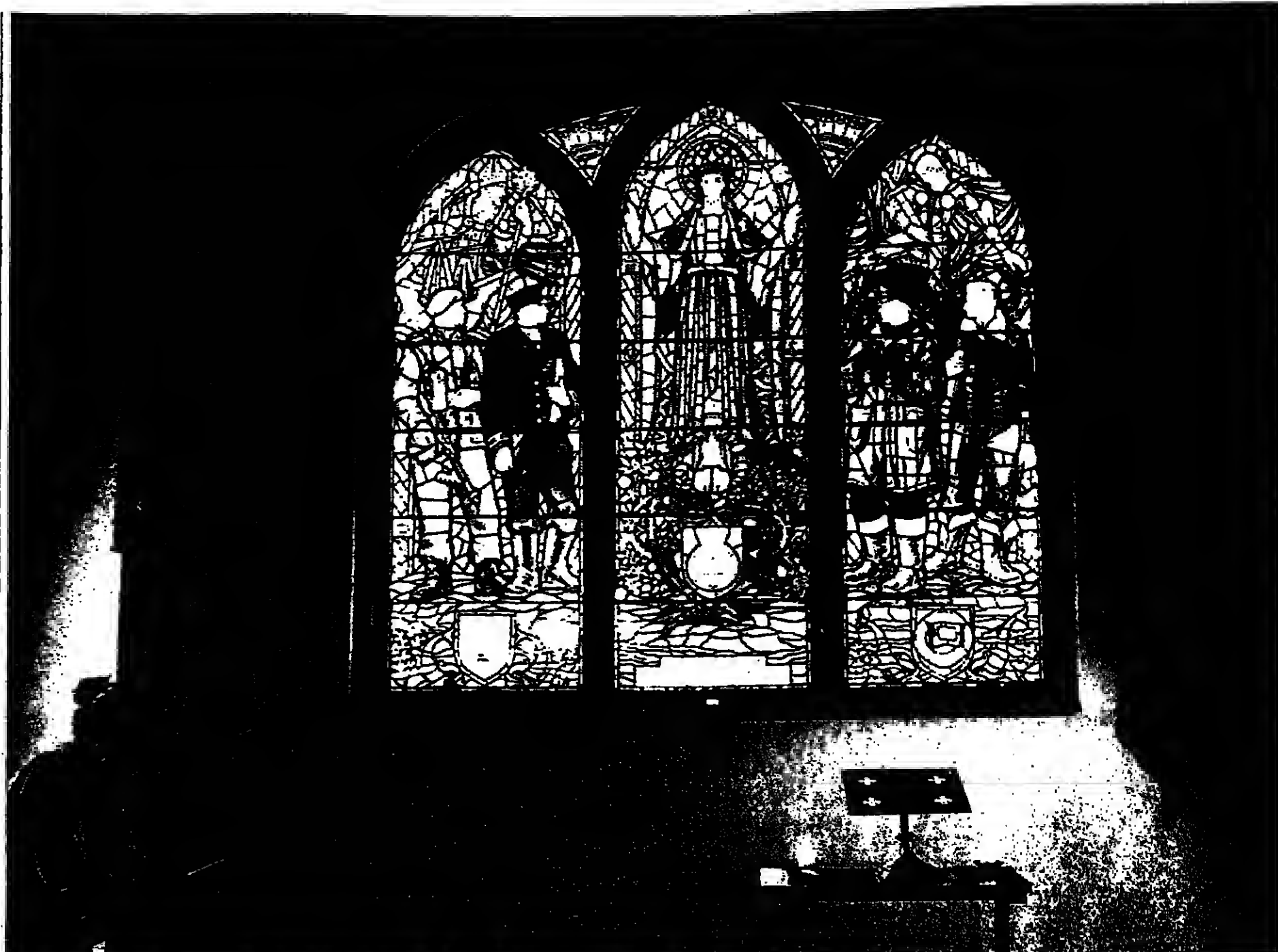
## Education + in The Tabloid

primary and secondary schools in inner and outer London boroughs.

It found clear class differences in how parents used league tables. Families where fathers were in professional jobs were much more likely to understand the tables than those from lower down the social scale. The former were also more likely to realise that the tables reflected the differing intakes of schools and not just how well a school was teaching its pupils.

John Major said last Tuesday that the Government would publish league tables of national curriculum test results for seven- and fourteen-year-olds in addition to those already published for GCSE and A-level.

Dr Anne West of the Centre for Educational Research at the London School of Economics, one of the researchers, said: "The report highlights the problem of finding a way of providing information about schools that is accessible to all parents



In memoriam: A woman prays in the chapel at Pangbourne College, Berkshire, by a stained-glass window which the school is to donate to the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, to be built in its grounds when the last £400,000 is raised. Old Pangbournians received 14 of the 40 naval decorations awarded after the war in 1982. Photograph: David Rose

# Truckers stranded in Spanish blockade

Jojo Moyes

Hundreds of British lorry drivers were yesterday stranded in Europe as striking Spanish truckers blocked ports and motorways.

The Foreign Office and freight organisations were warning drivers to avoid northern Spain, following unconfirmed reports of Spanish protesters using

catapults to smash wind-screens and slashing the tyres of foreign drivers who tried to run blockades. The trouble followed an incident last night when an English lorry driver allegedly threatened strikers with a gun.

"We have warned our chaps from about 10 days ago there were going to be problems," said a spokesman for the Road

Haulage Association yesterday. "The situation overall... is deteriorating rather than getting better."

Hundreds of lorries from all over Europe yesterday lined the roads around the main border crossings into France.

A Foreign Office spokesman estimated that 80 per cent of Spain's 200,000 trucks had joined the strike, demanding

cheaper fuel and better working conditions.

He added that there had been reports of attacks on cars with foreign plates.

"Our consuls are driving around trying to see if British drivers are all right - they can help those running out of money and take up grievances with the authorities," he said. Jimmy Gillespie, a lorry driver from Penrith, Cumbria, spent 16 hours at the border crossing from France at La Jonquera.

Speaking from Madrid yesterday he said: "I was threatened with being knifed if I didn't get out of my cab. I've seen other drivers getting their tyres slashed and windcreens put in."

"One British driver ran through a blockade, sending the Spaniards scattering from the road. But then the police pulled him over and he got his cab smashed up by a mob of Spaniards."

In November, dozens of Britons were blocked by French truckers, and their Greek counterparts have since brought chaos to roads and ferries.

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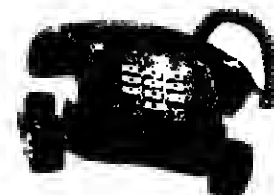
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Róisín McAliskey at a 1994 Belfast funeral, and her mother as Bernadette Devlin in 1971 in Fleet Street, London, protesting at media coverage of Ulster

## IRA suspect to be handcuffed during birth

Steve Beggan

A pregnant IRA suspect being held in prison pending extradition to Germany has been told she must give birth in handcuffs and cannot care for her baby in prison.

Róisín McAliskey, 25, daughter of the former nationalist MP Bernadette McAliskey, is being treated as a category A exceptional-risk prisoner at Holloway jail in London, even though she is more than six months pregnant and has no record of violence.

Her treatment is causing growing concern among MPs and civil rights groups and is being watched closely by Amnesty International, which has issued

an "urgent action bulletin" claiming that the conditions of her detention "may amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment".

Ms McAliskey is wanted for questioning by the German authorities over a mortar-bomb attack on the British Army base at Osnabrück last June, although she says she has never been to Germany. An extradition hearing in London today is expected to rubber stamp the handover to the Germans, but lengthy legal appeals will result in her still being in Holloway when her child is born.

The Home Office said last week that it had received no request from Ms McAliskey to care for her child in prison. However, she has been told that, as a category A prisoner, she may not use the prison's baby-care facilities while other inmates are there, ruling out the possibility of looking after her own baby.

Her mother told *The Independent* that she was visited by a senior prison official last week and told that she would have to "face up to some realities" over the birth of the child.

"He was as humane as he could be, but he said that she would have to make some practical adjustments as a category A prisoner," Mrs McAliskey said. "He said because the Home Office had designated her an exceptional escape risk, she would have to be handcuffed during the birth."

"He said she will be handcuffed to a 'birthing partner' which I sincerely hope will be a female rather than male prison officer. She was told that because of her designation, she could not mix with other prisoners and so couldn't use the mother-and-baby unit."

"Having the baby taken away is something she refuses to contemplate. I'm completely horrified by the prospect. She has never been in trouble in her life and all of a sudden they're putting her through this nightmare."

If the baby is taken away, Mrs McAliskey said it would be cared for by its father, Sean McCotter, the brother of Liam McCotter, a convicted IRA terrorist. But she added: "I'm afraid he would have trouble breast-feeding it."

The extradition warrant for Ms McAliskey says she is suspected of attempted murder and illegally handling explosives. She was detained at the request of German anti-terrorist officers, who have been hunting at least five members of the IRA cell which fired three home-made mortars from the back of a van.

One of the mortar bombs exploded near fuel tanks at the

base, which is the headquarters of 4 Armoured Brigade, but no one was hurt.

Within days police had discovered the terrorists' hideout and named former Royal Engineer Michael Dickson, 31, who had served in Germany, as a suspect. They said they believed the gang had fled back to Ireland. It is understood that the Germans intend to allege that Ms McAliskey posed as Mr Dickson's wife.

Labour MP Kevin McNamara, the party's former spokesman on Northern Ireland, has visited Ms McAliskey in prison and said that he is concerned about the designation of a six-month pregnant woman, whose health has been questioned by doctors, as a high-risk prisoner. He has tabled questions in the Commons of Michael Howard, the Home



Mrs McAliskey: Horrified by daughter's 'nightmare'

Secretary, demanding information about her treatment.

"I believe this is quite outrageous," he said. "I thought we had heard the last of women being chained up in hospital. It is her designation that will result in the baby being taken away because, as Category A, she can't mix with the other mothers."

"To suggest she would try to escape is ridiculous. The physical endurance required for a heavily pregnant and ill woman to escape from a prison would be quite extraordinary."

Amnesty's urgent-action bulletin said: "The outcome of this possible decision to separate the mother and baby would amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and would damage permanently the mother-child bonding relationship."

## Cuts hitting RAF safety, officers say

Christopher Bellamy  
Defence Correspondent

The RAF is not ready for "even a minor combat role", and safety has been put at risk because of financial cutbacks and a shortage of spares, according to officers who have recently left the service.

An RAF technician will say on a television programme, which is to be screened tonight, that he had been told not to tell aircrews that certain wires in Tornados and Harriers might catch fire because of extra wear and tear.

The crews were not to be told about the wiring, called Kapton, he said, because "if there is a war, or even if there is not a war, and they know this cable may ignite, they will not go on; they will not be in the aircraft". The US Air Force decided to move away from using Kapton as long ago as 1988.

*The Independent* recently reported concern about the RAF's ability to keep its Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft in the air. The new evidence about front line strike aircraft is revealed in an episode of the Channel 4 *Dispatches* programme to be screened tonight.

The programme cites a confidential report by Air Chief Marshal Sir William Whitten warning that cuts in manpower were "biting deeply" into the RAF's ability to fulfil its

operational tasks. In interviews, senior officers warn of low morale and that aircraft are having to be cannibalised to keep a few flying.

Air Vice Marshal Boz Robinson, a former station commander at RAF Valley, Anglesey, who keeps in touch with the RAF as a light aircraft instructor, said: "The mood throughout the whole of the Air Force is 'What on earth is happening to us? We were a perfectly good air force. Why does all this have to happen?'"

Group Captain Neil Buckland, a senior RAF planner in the MoD until last year, said the RAF did not have the spares it needed to keep the planes it has flying and was forced to "cannibalise" them instead.

Flight Lieutenant James Archer, a Tornado pilot at RAF Leuchars, Fife, until last year said: "When I joined 43 Squadron at Leuchars, we probably had eight aeroplanes at the start of the day that were serviceable. Very quickly after that, sort of '93, '94, we were getting down to very bad situations. We were regularly seeing a good day being six aircraft and a bad day being one."

The most damning comment is from former Tornado pilot Squadron Leader Ed Smith. He said: "At the front line, true effectiveness is being reduced. We are not ready for even a minor combat role."

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## Korean upheaval: Corruption scandal shakes government in South, as defector leaves North reeling

# Top Seoul politicians offer to resign over bribe claims

Sang-hun Choe  
Associated Press

Seoul — South Korea's Prime Minister and his governing party chairman said yesterday they were ready to resign to take moral responsibility for a bribery-for-loans scandal.

"I believe the Prime Minister must take responsibility," Prime Minister Lee Soo Sung was quoted by his spokesman as telling a Cabinet meeting. "I have no intention to cling to my post."

Ahn Kwan Ki, Mr Lee's spokesman, said the Prime Minister held himself morally responsible, although he was not directly involved in the scandal, which centres on a bankrupt steel company.

Lee Hong Koo, chairman of the ruling New Korea Party, also told President Kim Young Sam that he was ready to resign, party officials said yesterday. Mr Lee had been seeking his party's nomination to run for president in an election scheduled for December.

It remained uncertain whether the President would accept the two leaders' offer to quit, officials said. The offers came shortly after



Centre of attention: Kim Woo Suk, who offered to resign as Home Affairs Minister, heading for the prosecutor's office in Seoul for questioning yesterday. Photograph: Reuters

prosecutors called in two close aides to President Kim for questioning about alleged involvement in the scandal. Before he appeared for questioning, the Home Minister, Kim Woo Suk, also offered to resign.

Also questioned yesterday was Hwang Byong Tae, a former ambassador to China and now a ruling party MP. Kwon Ro Gap, a close confidant of opposition presidential hopeful Kim Dae Jung, was

another politician questioned yesterday. Two bank heads and two government MPs, including an aide to President Kim, have already been arrested on charges of taking bribes or

peddling influence for loans to bankrupt Hanbo Steel Industry Co. Hanbo Steel, a flagship company of the Hanbo group, South Korea's 14th largest conglomerate, collapsed on 23 January with \$6bn debt, most

ly in bank loans. Three other Hanbo subsidiaries also went under. The Home Minister headed the Construction Ministry in 1993-1994, when Hanbo obtained a government permit to build a steel plant on re-

claimed land. Mr Hwang was ambassador to China in 1993-1995, when Hanbo was looking into investments in steel and construction projects there. He heads the National Assembly's Finance Committee.

Mr Kwon, a vice president of the largest opposition party, the National Congress for New Politics, had earlier admitted receiving \$180,000 from Hanbo but claimed it was a legitimate political contribution.

He also admitted later that he had received \$116,000 from Hanbo through a government MP who was arrested on Tuesday on charges of taking an equal amount of cash in bribes from the steel company.

The developments were the latest in the 18-day government investigation into the scandal, which has become a major embarrassment for President Kim and his government.

Mr Dae-jung said he has evidence that the President received illegal political funds from Hanbo for his 1992 election campaign, which eventually laid the foundation for the preferential government bank loans to the steel company. The President did not respond to the accusation.

## Defection exposes weakness in Kim's leadership

Richard Lloyd Parry

The government of North Korea, already one of the most isolated and unpredictable in the world, suffered a devastating blow yesterday, when one of its most senior cadres defected to its hated enemy, South Korea.

Hwang Jang Yop, a close adviser of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, and one of the regime's leading ideologues, fled to the South Korean embassy in Peking, and requested asylum, according to Seoul's foreign ministry. The South Korean cabinet, which is reeling from a corruption scandal, held an emergency meeting to discuss the defection and the foreign minister immediately cancelled a planned visit to an international meeting in Singapore.

Mr Hwang is the highest-ranking official ever to desert North Korea, and the defection could hardly have come at a more sensitive moment. Economically, the country is believed to be close to collapse, with continued fuel shortages bringing paralysis to factories and farms and forcing the closure of unheated schools and offices. After two consecutive years of serious floods, the country recently admitted it has only half of the rice it needs to feed its people.

Pyongyang has received millions of pounds of grain and fuel oil from the United States, Japan and South Korea, as well as international charities and United Nations organisations. The U.N.'s food aid agency said yesterday it had launched an urgent appeal to raise \$41.6 million for urgent supplies to stave off famine in North Korea.

Rome-based World Food Programme said people were receiving a quarter of their minimum daily food needs. But for all its obvious economic distress, the Pyongyang regime has never before given any sign of being politically divided, and Mr Hwang's defection may prove to be a turning point in more ways than one. As one of the most senior members of the ruling Workers' Party, he will be able to provide unprecedented information on the internal workings of the most closed country in the world. But, alarmingly, his desertion suggests that North Korea's domestic turmoil reaches the highest political level.

Yesterday's defection is made all the more humiliating by its timing. This Sunday, the 35th birthday of the country's "Dear Leader", Kim Jong Il, is North Korea's biggest national holiday, celebrated nationwide with parades, operas and gymnastic displays. Mr Hwang was in Peking on his way back from Tokyo where he was guest of honour at a seminar held in honour of the Dear Leader. In speeches and interviews, he emphasised the stability of Kim Jong Il's regime and predicted that he would soon take on the post of president, left vacant by the death in 1994 of his father,

the country's founding leader Kim Il Sung.

As a secretary of the Workers' Party, 72-year old Mr Hwang was ranked in the top 25 of the North Korean political hierarchy. He was educated at the elite Kim Il Sung University and in Moscow, and like many leading party members is said to be a distant relative of Kim Jong Il. Mr Hwang served as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of the North's parliament, the Supreme Peoples' Assembly. He was one of its most senior propagandists, the leading exponent of the country's guiding philosophy of *juche* or "self reliance", Pyongyang's curious blend of conventional Marxism and the personality cult of the Kim family.

"He's not just a big fish, he's a blue whale," said Aidan Foster-Carter of the Leeds University Korea Project yesterday. "The blow to the Pyongyang government is immeasurable," said Koichi Kato, the secretary-general of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party, which has close, unofficial ties with Pyongyang. A second man, identified as Kim Duk Hung, the president of a North Korean trading company, accompanied Mr Hwang



Hwang Jang Yop: Highest official to desert North Korea

to the South Korean embassy. "Since it has been established that he is defecting of his own free will, the issue will be handled through consultations with the Chinese government," Seoul's ambassador to Peking, Chung Jong Wook, said last night. The two are not yet home and dry: China maintains a discreet but close relationship with North Korea and is obliged by treaty to repatriate North Koreans found without valid travel documents.

Pyongyang's unofficial embassy in Tokyo, the General Association of Korean Residents, denied the reports, insisting that Mr Hwang had already boarded a train bound for North Korea.

"Hwang's defection is the strongest ever signal the Stalinist regimes hierarchy is cracking," said Park Hun-Ok, senior fellow at Seoul's Institute of North Korean Studies.

"With North Korea's economy in a shambles and the country totally isolated in the international community, only its *juche* ideology has been the driving force to keep it alive."

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# Press law terrorises Ethiopian writers

David Orr  
Addis Ababa

Like other journalists on the technologically under-resourced Ethiopian weekly, *Tobya*, Biru Tesfaye has to write his reports with pen on paper. But that is the least of his problems. Far more worrying is the threat of imprisonment. With three members of the staff in jail, the acting editor cannot but help think he might be next.

Ethiopia might enjoy more press freedom than most African countries – according to a just-published report by the New York-based human rights organisation, Freedom House, it has a “partly free press” – but it has more journalists in prison than any other country on the continent. At the time of writing, there are about 14 journalists in detention in Ethiopia; few of them have been tried.

When Arega Wolde Kirkos

was arrested early this year in connection with the publication of a reader's letter, *Tobya* decided to close down for a month in protest. Two journalists were imprisoned late last year for reprinting in the *Tobya* monthly magazine a contentious article by an Ethiopian professor living abroad (one has since been released on bail). Another was detained for an investigative piece on the hijacked Ethiopian Airlines flight which crashed last year in the Indian Ocean.

*Tobya* is due to reappear today. However, journalists believe their troubles are far from over.

“It's clear the government doesn't want a free press,” says the paper's lawyer, Derbew Temesgen. “We're being victimised and the situation seems to be getting worse. The government could close us down very easily. A fine of 80,000 birr (£7,600) would wipe us out immediately.”

At the forefront of press grievance is the Press Proclamation which was introduced in 1992, a year after the overthrow of the repressive Dergue regime which had ruled Ethiopia for 17 years. Though it abolished censorship, the new law has made it difficult for journalists to write about such subjects as ethnicity and national security.

Harsh sentences have been given to those journalists deemed to have violated the often arbitrary interpretation of the new press laws.

In the past three years, says a recently-published report by the Paris-based press rights group, Reporters Sans Frontières, around 150 journalists have been subject to legal proceedings in Ethiopia.

“Their crime,” says the report, “was revealing news about national security or ethnic rivalry. In Ethiopia, criticising the government, or even showing

some signs of independence, can lead to arrest or a police summons.”

With more than 70 ethnic groups living within its borders, the subject of ethnicity is a vexatious one. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) and again during the Dergue regime, political power was largely vested in the Amhars who make up about a third of the population.

The ruling coalition of Meles Zenawi, however, is widely seen as being dominated by the northern Tigrayans.

“There is minority rule in this country and we take a strong editorial line on the subject,” says Hailu Woldeasadiq, acting general manager of *Tobya*.

“The government is devoting more economic resources to Tigre than to other parts of the country. It should not be punishable to discuss issues like this.”



Going home: A Palestinian woman arriving in Ramallah after being released from an Israeli jail. Some of these women face problems returning to traditional Muslim families who consider jail a social stigma. Photograph: AP

## Speaker to be new president of Ecuador

Phil Davison  
Latin America Correspondent

Ecuador's Congress has appointed its Speaker, Fabian Alarcon, as the country's President, ending a week of political turmoil caused by the ousting of president Abdala Bucaram on the grounds of “mental incapacity.”

Mr Alarcon, 49, a lawyer, replaced Rosalia Arteaga, 40. She was appointed interim president on Sunday in a compromise deal brokered by the military to end street protests.

There had been reports that once she was in the job Mrs Arteaga would not give it up. But she resigned on Tuesday night shortly before Congress voted in Mr Alarcon. She did, however, criticise Mr Alarcon's appointment and called for a referendum to change the constitution so that Congress could not dump a president and name its Speaker for the job.

Mr Bucaram, meanwhile, still claimed to be the country's legal president and called Mr Alarcon “a Judas, a traitor”, for using a little-known law to get rid of him.

Mr Bucaram once relished the nickname “el loco”, the madman, but no-one seriously considered him insane. Eccentric, certainly. He is now on a tour of South American capitals to push his line that he was

illegally ousted and that the same thing could happen to other leaders in the continent.

Mr Alarcon is to call new elections next year, so that a new president can be sworn in in August 1998. He is expected to run, as is Mrs Arteaga. Mr Bucaram has said he will also run, although some Ecuadorian analysts doubt he will return from his current tour, as he may face corruption charges.

The recent turmoil began after Mr Bucaram, who ran for President as a populist last year, and won easily, performed a policy about-turn and imposed a series of austerity measures. These included prices rises of up to 300 per cent on basic utilities, such as electricity and gas. He was also widely criticised for corruption, and for giving government jobs to his relatives and friends.

“The entire country is breathing easier because we have put this crisis behind us,” said the armed forces chief, General Páez Montalvo.

Gen Montalvo, a key figure in the negotiations to end the crisis, was widely applauded when he appeared in Congress for the swearing-in ceremony.

The dispute over power generated widespread fears in Ecuador that if an unelected charge, the military would seize control of the country themselves.

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## obituaries / gazette

## Godfrey Bond

When Godfrey Bond retired in 1992 he had achieved eminence in his college, Pembroke, and in his university, Oxford, and was greatly liked and admired by colleagues and pupils.

Son of an Irish civil servant, he went as a scholar to Trinity College Dublin from Campbell College and the Royal Belfast Academical Institute. At Trinity in 1949, most unusually, he sat two sets of final examinations at the same time, in Philosophy and in Classics, and took distinguished Firsts in both. He came to St John's, Oxford, to work on the papyrus fragments of Euripides' *Hippolyte*, but was almost immediately elected to a Fellowship and Lectureship in Classics at Pembroke.

Pembroke was still an old-fashioned college: the tutor whom Bond replaced, Herbert Drake, had a better understanding of port than scholarship. Bond's energy, rigour and enthusiasm for his subject soon effected change. Among measures he devised to raise standards, some in concert with R.B. McCallum (shortly to become Master), were weekly invigilated translation tests that encouraged regular reading of texts. He discerningly scrutinised candidates passed on by colleges then attracting a stronger field, and soon made Pembroke a college to which schools were keen to send good classicists. Classics became one of the college's strong subjects, and it is a tribute to Bond's manifold skills as a tutor that two of the established classical chairs in Oxford are currently occupied by his pupils, to say nothing of several elsewhere. Pupils were exposed to razor-sharp argument, good sense and a suspicion of dogma.

Although a specialist in Greek tragedy and Greek elegiac poetry (which he drily warned his lecture audience was not a subject to be read in an armchair with feet on the mantelpiece), Bond was as stylish a composer of Latin as of Greek (a facility later manifest in his public orations) and gave stimulating tutorials on Latin as well as on Greek literature. Asking questions about literature was not then a common feature of "Mods" tutorials, but by the later 1950s he had his pupils writing numerous essays as well as composing prose and verse and trying to master textual criticism. He was predictably part of the 1960s movement that secured a place for the study of

literature in "Greats". As its Chairman in 1973-76 he also steered the classics sub-faculty through the early problems generated by that revolution.

Godfrey Bond's contribution to Pembroke went far beyond Classics. He was Senior Tutor (1962-72), Vice-Gerent and from 1970 Senior Fellow, but made his mark above all as Dean, first in the 1950s and then from 1979 to his retirement in 1992. He found it easy to establish a rapport with the young, he administered regulations humanely, and he made himself widely known and liked among junior members through his decaan lunches, of which undergraduates casually intercepted in the quad and sundry malefactors were as regular beneficiaries as the youthful great and good.

As a tutor too he was a great entertainer: when in 1959 he married Alison, daughter of Mr Justice T.C. Kingsmill Moore and herself a graduate of Trinity, they moved into Masfield House on Bous Hill and established a reputation for generous hospitality: many Pembrokeians recall the popular lunches, buffet suppers and dinner parties given life by Godfrey and Alison and, later, their children Catherine, Elwyn and Kingsmill.

This side of his character reflected the care for and interest in individuals that made him so sympathetic a tutor and colleague. He would give unstinting problems and offering advice, always ready to see others' points of view. Only very occasionally would he express himself forcefully concerning those whose standards and behaviour even his tolerance could not endure. More often a "humph!" would indicate that one had said something that merited scepticism or disapproval, or his own sardonic account of an incident would



Bond: Public Orator

convey, with delicate humour, just what he thought.

Bond did not find the formal aspects of college and university life uncongenial, and his year as Senior Proctor (1964-65) led him into university administration: he served on the General Board from 1970 to 1976, and his impressive speech on retiring from the proctorship was a foretaste of the scores of Latin honorific speeches he composed as Public Orator, from his election in 1980 to his retirement in 1992. His care in gathering biographical data about the honorees, presented in elegant and often witty Latin, again reflected his generous use of his time and ensured that his tenure was a distinguished one.

His scholarship was also distinguished. In a generation whose masters set less store than now by sheer volume he deservedly established his reputation with an edition and commentary of Euripides' *Hippolyte* (1963) and then of his *Mad Hercules* (1981), a major and lasting scholarly contribution. For somebody so integrated into his college's life sabbatical leave passed in Oxford was too vulnerable, and he wisely spent some terms of leave in Princeton, Cambridge and Dublin (a city of which he was always fond and proud). The years serving as Dean and Public Orator contributed to the formation of his next project, a general study of Euripides.

Doubtless his time would have been differently used had he been elected to the Chair of Greek in Dublin or to his college's mastership, but he did not allow the disappointment he must have felt in not obtaining either office to diminish his zest or his attachment to Pembroke. He was stoical when Pembroke decided not to replace him in his tutorship and to cease to offer Classics. It is a great sadness that his illness should have prevented his continuing to serve scholarship and the academic community in his retirement as he would have wished.

Ewen Bowie

Godfrey William Bond, Greek scholar and teacher, born Sydneyham 24 July 1925; Fellow and Lecturer in Classics, Pembroke College, Oxford 1950-92; Public Orator, Oxford University 1980-92; married 1959 Alison Kingsmill Moore (one son, two daughters); died Headington, Oxfordshire 30 January 1997.

## Mollie Panter-Downes

Shortage of space, I am sure, writes Christopher Sladen, meant that Anthony Bailey's obituary of Mollie Panter-Downes [3 February] failed to mention

the published collection of her Second World War pieces for the *New Yorker*: *London War News*, edited by William Shaw, was published in 1971 and pro-

vides an excellent view of life on the Home Front—admittedly a partial view, but colourful and perceptive. It is rather easier to find, too, than *One Fine Day*.

## Gustav Delbanco

Gustav Delbanco used to say that when he started out as a dealer in Old Master drawings, in the 1930s, the phrase "art market" would have been regarded as offensive. There were very few art dealers and they sold to a small clientele of connoisseurs; only dealers bought at the great auction houses like Sotheby's. The ones who prospered were those with an immaculate eye. The idea that great art could double up as a great investment was to come much later and, in Gustav Delbanco's view, was to pervert taste and the visual art irreparably.

Delbanco arrived in London in the early Thirties from Nazi Germany. His was an old Venetian Jewish trading family which had come to Hamburg in the 19th century. Gustav's father was determined that he should

join the family firm of importers and exporters but "G" was equally determined not to. He took a doctorate at Heidelberg and then long afterwards left Germany. From a small gallery in Piccadilly, Delbanco established himself as possessing one of the finest "eyes" in the country. His expertise was the 17th and 18th centuries and he was often called in by those holding great collections such as the British Museum to help in their evaluations. A Gustav Delbanco authentication was much prized.

After the Second World War he had two partners, Henry Roland and Lillian Browne, decided to open a gallery of contemporary art in Cork Street, Cork Street is now one of the art thoroughfares of Europe, but in 1945 there was only one other gallery there, the Rodent.

The only surviving partner of Roland, Browne and Delbanco is Browne, who had set up wartime exhibitions at the National Gallery and met Roland, another Old Master specialist, and refugee from Hamburg, when she wanted German lessons.

"In those days all art books were in German," she says, "and so German was an essential language. Neither Gustav nor Henry Roland had much money so they had to do things like give German lessons. But they were widely accepted as men of quite remarkable knowledge."

Roland, Browne and Delbanco, though never one of London's richest galleries, soon became one of its most prestigious. One of their first exhibitions was of Rodin, whose work had suffered considerable neglect in Britain. Painters such as

Joseph Herman, Philip Sutton, Alfred Cohen, Keith Grant and Bernard Dunstan regularly showed at a gallery which became known as "The Scholars" or "The Connoisseurs".

Delbanco was as interested in people as in paintings. Visitors to the gallery would find themselves engrossed for hours in conversation with him. His wife Stefania would receive a telephone call saying that he was bringing an extra two or three home to dinner—people he had met in the gallery that afternoon. Occasionally this led to unfortunate misunderstandings.

Painters he met assumed that an invitation to supper implied that the dealer was interested and might show their paintings, when all too often he was fascinated by them, not their work. He looked baffled when it was

explained that for a dealer to take home that night a young artist who had come into the gallery to show his work could lead to cruel disappointment. "A bad painter can be an amusing person," he would reply, simply.

His house in Hampstead was a treasure-store of his eclectic tastes. A splendid Rubens, *The Fall of Satan*, hung in the drawing-room. He said that in the early days he and Roland frequently "popped" the Rubens when they needed cash. There were wonderful Rodin figurines, a beautiful Degas sculpture of a dancer. "Compare it to a Rodin," he would say, tossing a valuable piece of sculpture. "Do you see that the Degas is cold—a bit lifeless. You see, Degas didn't like women. Rodin did."

Delbanco loved primitive art

too. He possessed one of the finest collections in private hands of Staffordshire figures, which he regarded as folk art. Old Master drawings of great value justified with pieces he had picked up in small sale rooms or on his many trips abroad. His house was far too large for him, especially after his wife's death of cancer eight years ago. But he regarded it not so much as a home as a place to display his art, which he rearranged from time to time "so that I can see it all anew". There were few concessions to modern tastes—a black-and-white television which he never switched on; no central heating. It was his private gallery and he wanted it that way.

Gustav Delbanco was a genuinely modest man who refused to accept that he made



Delbanco: 'The Scholars'

any contribution to the fine arts in Britain at all. A great scholar, he refused to write books: "Who cares what I say?"

Stewart Steven

Gustav Delbanco, art dealer, born Hamburg, Germany 7 December 1903; married 1931 Stefania Fainberg (died 1988; one daughter); died London 25 January 1997.

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## IN MEMORIAM

MACEY: Alex, journalist, formerly with the Foreign Desk of the Independent on Sunday. On his birthday, remembered with love and missed every day. Kate

Announcements for Deaths, Births, Marriages, Deaths, Memorials, Weddings, Anniversaries, In Memoriam should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5UL, telephoned on 011-293 2013 or faxed on 011-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). Other Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen's eldest son, Prince William, Duke of Cambridge, is to marry Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, daughter of Lord and Lady Sherrin, on 10 April 1997. The Duke of Cambridge is a member of the Household Cavalry and is currently serving in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards. The Duchess of Cambridge is a member of the Household Cavalry and is currently serving in the Royal Scots Dragoon Guards.

## Birthdays

Mr Michael Attenborough, executive producer, Royal Shakespeare Company; 77. Dr David Almond, chairman, Guinness Mahon Holdings; 70. Mr David Banks, Editorial Director, Mirror Group Newspapers; 49. Miss Caroline Blackwood, actress; 64. Mr Liam Brady, football manager; 31. Professor Derek Burke, former Vice-Chancellor, University of East Anglia; 67. Mr John Butcher MP; 51. Miss Jacqueline Clarke, actress; 59. Dr John Clinton, former Apothecary to HM Household, Windsor; 70. Miss Margaret Collins, former Merton-in-Chief, GARNES; 70. Mr Garth Davies, chairman and chief executive, Glyndwr International; 67. Mr Brian Deacon, actor; 48. Miss Eileen Farrell, soprano; 77. Professor Janet Finch, Vice-Chancellor, Keele University; 51. Baroness Fletcher, councillor and local government worker; 83. Mr Peter Gabriel, musician; 47. Dr David Gaskell, horticultural writer; 69. Lord Lewis of Newham, Warden of Robinson College, Cambridge; 69. Mr John McAllister MP; 49. Mr Gordon McAllister MP; 37. Miss Kim Nichols, actress; 64. Mr Leonard Pincus, cricketer; 47. Lord Patten of Newhall, former government minister; 78. Lord Pym, former government minister; 75. Mr Oliver Reed, actor; 59. Mrs Margaret Scott, actress; 85. Mr George Segal, actor; 63. Mr Donald Snyper, actor; 54. Dr Donald Snyper, former Principal, Mansfield College, Oxford; 67.

## Anniversaries

Births: Eleanor Farjeon, writer, 1881; Georges Simenon, writer, 1901. Deaths: Catherine Howard, fifth wife of Henry VIII, executed 1542; Dame Christabel Harcourt Pankhurst, suffragette, 1928; Jean Renoir, film-maker, 1979. On this day: William and Mary ascended the throne, 1689; Alexander Solzhenitsyn was expelled from the Soviet Union, 1974. Today is the Feast Day of St Catherine dei Ricci, St Emmanilda or Emmenigild, St Licinius or Lesio, St Manuian the Hermit, St Modunoc, St Polyeuctus of Melitene and St Stephen of Rieth.

## Dinners

Royal Society: The Princess Royal attended a dinner held yesterday evening at the Royal Society, London SW1, to celebrate the award of the 2006 Nobel Prize for Chemistry to Sir Harold Kroto.

Board of Deputies of British Jews: King Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Queen Noor, and the Prime Minister, Mr John Major, were the guests of honour at the annual President's Dinner of the Board of Deputies of British Jews held yesterday evening at the Hilton Hotel, London W1. Mr and Mrs P.J. Zabladov were the hosts. Mr Eldred Taw-chink QC, President of the Board, presided.

## Duty to pay foreign earnings to state bank not a debt

## LAW REPORT

13 January 1997

Camdex International Ltd v Bank of Zambia and another (Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Otton, Lord Justice Phillips)) 17 January 1997

A foreign company's obligation under the public law of its own country to lodge a proportion of its foreign currency earnings in that country's state bank's account in London did not create a debt enforceable by civil proceedings and capable of attachment by way of garnishee proceedings by a judgment creditor of the state bank.

The Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal by the plaintiff, Camdex International Ltd, against the refusal of Mr Justice Morison on 24 May 1996 to make absolute a garnishee order nisi whereby part of a judgment debt of US\$120m obtained against the defendant, Bank of Zambia, would be satisfied by the garnishee, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Ltd (ZCCM).

Under Zambian law ZCCM, as Zambia's largest foreign currency earner, was required

to pay 45 per cent of such earnings to the defendant bank, being credited in return with the state-owned central bank of Zambia, administered exchange control pursuant to the Bank of Zambia Act 1985. Under reg 3(1) of the Bank of Zambia (Foreign Currency) Regulations 1994, foreign currency income obtained by ZCCM was to be disposed of in accordance with written directions from the bank.

Camdex, as the assignee of rights held by the Central Bank of Zambia against the Bank of Zambia under two deposit agreements, issued proceedings to recover part of the debt and on 18 September 1995 obtained summary judgment. Camdex then sought to garnish foreign exchange in ZCCM's hands to satisfy the bank's judgment debt in the UK.

But on 26 September 1995 the bank changed its directions

to ZCCM, authorising it to receive its foreign currency earnings into its own bank account at the Zambia National Commercial Bank in London, and not the Bank of Zambia's. It was then to transfer by standing order 45 per cent of such earnings to the bank's account.

Under Order 49, rule 1(1) of the Rules of the Supreme Court, where a person (the judgment creditor) obtained a judgment or order for the payment of some other person (the judgment debtor) of a sum of money, and any other person in the jurisdiction (the garnishee) was indebted to the judgment debtor, the court might order the garnishee to pay the judgment debt.

Given that ZCCM was within the jurisdiction, the first question was whether ZCCM was "indebted to" the Bank of Zambia. That in turn depended on whether ZCCM's oblig-

ation to pay a proportion of its foreign exchange to the bank was one enforceable by civil action.

Mark Howard QC and Alan Rushworth (Baker & McKenzie) for Camdex; Richard Salter QC and Daphne Loebl (Eversheds) for ZCCM; Michael Brindle QC and Richard Handyside (Lovell White Durrant) for the bank.

Lord Justice Simon Brown said it was clearly no coincidence that the direction of 26 September was given just eight days after Camdex had obtained summary judgment against the bank plainly it was designed to hinder execution of the judgment debt. The question was whether, when ZCCM then breached that direction, by cancelling its standing order in favour of the bank, the bank had a civil cause of action against ZCCM.

There was no general principle that a statutory obligation to pay must give rise to a civil

cause of action for the recovery of the money due. Each case must depend on its own facts. Here it was impossible to conclude that a civil action was intended to be for the recovery of foreign exchange due under the direction.

Regulation 3 of the 1994 Regulations, under which directions were to be given by the bank, was headed "Offences relating to foreign currency"; the entire mechanism for controlling the disposition of foreign currency was explicitly criminal.

There was not a word in the regulations suggesting the availability of any civil process of recovery, whether to the bank or anyone else. On this fundamental ground, Camdex's appeal must be dismissed.

Even if such a cause of action existed, his Lordship would hold the claim unenforceable in the English courts, since the courts had no power to entertain an action for the enforcement of the public law of a foreign state.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

## Gerald Marks

In 1994, the night before his 94th birthday, Gerald Marks sang a selection of his songs in the Lincoln Center, New York, ending with his biggest hit, "All of Me". He told his audience that, in 1931, he had left his native Michigan with enough money to stay in New York for one week while he tried to sell the song. He played "All of Me" for the vaudeville star Belle Baker. When he sang "Your goodbye / Left me with eyes that cry / How can I / Go on, dear, without you?", she began to sob uncontrollably; it happened to be the anniversary of her husband's death. "From then on," said Marks, "she plugged my song and made it a hit all by herself."

Before turning composer, he had worked as a pianist in local dance bands, eventually forming his own orchestra in the late 1920s. "All of Me", which he wrote with the lyricist Seymour Simons, was his first song and he never topped it; the year of its publication it was heard in *Careless Lady* (1932), a film starring Joan Bennett and John Boles. Frank Sinatra sang it in *Meet Danny Wilson* (1952), and recorded it. The following year Gloria DeHaven sang it in *Down Among the Sheltering Palms* (1953), as did Diana Ross in *Lady Sings the Blues* (1972), the film biography of Billie Holiday. It was recorded by Holiday, as well as by Louis Armstrong, Kate Smith, Russ Columbo, Johnnie Ray, Willie Nelson, and the hands of Benny Carter, Louis Jordan, Billie Holiday, Count Basie, Jimmy Dorsey (vocal by Helen O'Connell), and Paul White (vocal by Mildred Bailey). "All of Me" was also heard in the 1984 Steve Martin / Lily Tomlin film of the same name.

Turning to Broadway, Marks composed songs for George White's *Musical Hall Varieties* (1932), Earl Carroll's *Sketch Book* (1935) and *White Horse Inn* (1936), with Irving Caesar, he wrote "That's What I Want for Christmas" for Shirley Temple in her film *Stowaway* (1936). Also in 1936, he joined Sammy Lerner and Caesar to write a ballad that they took to Al Jolson, hoping he'd sing it on his new radio series, *The Lifebuoy Show*. Jolson, however, wanted a song in the tradition of "Swanee", which Caesar had written 18 years earlier with George Gershwin. The three promised to write such a number if Jolson would sing their ballad. The night he did so (to no appreciable effect), they wrote "It Tunes What They Say About Dixie". After they sang it to him over the telephone, Jolson featured the song on radio, and it became one of the hits of 1936.

Perhaps to atone for the politically naive picture painted by their "Dixie" song, Caesar, Lerner and Marks wrote "There Ain't No Colour Line Around the Rainbow" seven years later. "Dig down deep / To buy the bonds that buy the tanks / The bombers for our fighting Yanks / Dig down deep!", sang Frank Sinatra and the Pied Pipers on a 1942 recording by Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra. Marks wrote "Dig Down Deep" (with Walter Hirsch and Sano Marco) shortly before forming his own armed forces dance band. After writing two unsuccessful musicals, *My Dear Public* (1943) and *Hold It!* (1948), Marks turned his back on Broadway. With Irving Caesar he wrote the instructional collection *Sing a Song of Safety*, widely used by American schools. Marks spent his last years lecturing at universities and working on a book about his colourful days in Tin Pan Alley.

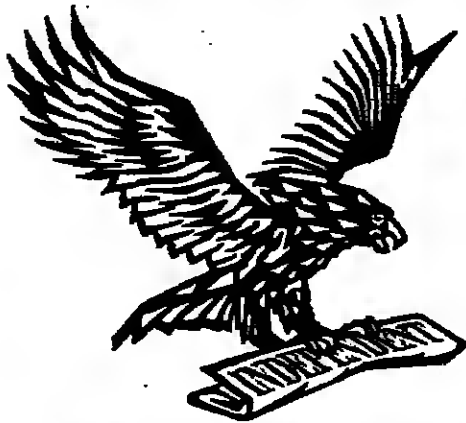
Dick Vosburgh

Gerald Marks, composer, pianist, bandleader, born Saginaw, Michigan 13 October 1900; died New York 27 January 1997.

هكذا من الأناط



# Take temptation out of the Chancellor's way



ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 6DL  
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Jobs are up, dole queues down, price rises are slowing, the economic news could hardly be better. Compared to our record over the past few decades, the economy seems to be performing extremely well, and British economic policy appears very well balanced.

Indeed, history will judge Kenneth Clarke an extremely impressive Chancellor. Just think how much better he has been than his predecessors. Norman Lamont steered us through the ERM crisis - thanks for that Norman - and a dismal recession. Nigel Lawson stoked a boom by cutting taxes and prattling on about miracles, just when inflation was taking off. Mr Clarke, in contrast, has been a huggable hero, resisting the worst political pressures to go for growth or slash taxes in the run up to the election.

In a climate of widespread admiration for Chancellor Clarke, it takes some nerve to utter a dissenting cough. But it must be done. Ahem. We do indeed admire Mr Clarke. In his battles with the Bank of England many months ago, he - and not the Governor - was right about interest rates. In his battles with his party colleagues, he was right to resist their political pressure to open the empty public purse for tax cuts, or to go for growth.

But that's not the point. Just because one Chancellor has handled things well in the past doesn't mean he is pursuing

the right policy now. Nor does it give us good reason to be confident that our Chancellors will be as virtuous in future.

The trouble is that our expectations have been lowered too far by countless economic failures and mistakes in the past. When Ken Clarke swans in and gets a few things right, we all fall over in astonishment, and assume the historical problems with Britain's policy performance must now be solved. Sadly, that is not the case.

Consider for a moment the temptations facing even the "virtuous" Chancellor Clarke right now. He may be right that no further rise in interest rates are needed. He may be correct that inflationary pressures are not growing - despite the falling unemployment, rising wages, booming house prices in the capital, and rising consumer spending that the Bank is so concerned about.

And then again, he could be wrong. He could be pushing our luck - our luck, not his, for the election will be long gone by the time we discover the answer.

As the Chancellor has always been keen to point out, judgements about economic policies don't just rely on statistics - the facts and figures only tell us what was happening several months ago. They don't tell us where the economy is going. A bit of nous, a bit of instinct, a bit of chatting with constituents and sniffing the air can go a long way. But

sniff the air now, and it smells as if the economy is flowering. People are shopping, buying houses, smiling even, despite the miserable weather.

No one believes that inflation is about to explode out of control any minute. But if the pressures are welling, and they aren't nipped quickly by a quarter point or half point rise in the cost of borrowing now, then interest rates will have to go up by a lot more later on.

But from Ken Clarke's point of view, why should he be putting rates up now? Why not take a punt on inflation staying low?

Mr Clarke is bound to gamble a little here and there. Who can blame him? There is an election looming, after all, and he is, first and foremost, a politician. The trouble is that Chancellors will always face the temptation to delay difficult decisions under pressure from the electorate or from party colleagues.

Investors, employers, workers and voters all know this. That is why, in the end, we all expect governments to give in when things become grim, to loosen up a little, and to allow inflation to rise. As the financial markets testify, people generally expect British inflation to be

higher than it is in countries where monetary policy is taken out of the hands of politicians and handled by a central bank. As a result our interest rates are higher, and our businesses and our mortgage holders have to fork out more.

So why don't we take a deep breath and tie our politicians' hands? Why not take short-term monetary policy decisions out of the hands of politicians and give them to the bankers and economists instead? So long as politicians, accountable to voters, set the overall framework, democracy would not be violated. The job of the Chancellor would be to set the inflation target. The task of the technocrats in the Bank would be merely to monitor the economy and adjust interest rates in order to achieve it. While politicians and technocrats agree that there is no long-run trade-off between inflation and unemployment, and that there is nothing to be gained by adjusting our inflationary target month by month, then government loses nothing by handing over the control of interest rates.

Of course the Bank would need to get its act together. This year's record on economic advice has not been brilliant. The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street could do with a little shaking up if she is to cope adequately with her new responsibilities. She will of course make mistakes from time to time, just as politicians do. And she could do with

a little more time spent sniffing the air, and getting a sense of what's going on to balance her dry statistics.

But at least she wouldn't have a five-yearly incentive to get things wrong deliberately, as politicians often have. The fact that Ken Clarke has done a pretty good job of resisting the political incentives to screw up shouldn't blind us to the fact that they are powerful and damaging nevertheless.

## The rot always sets in locally

How seriously should we worry about the junketing Labour councillors of Doncaster? Isn't junketing an ancient town hall tradition - a venial sin, deserving finger-pointing and red faces? We think not: a public culture which blinks at local misbehaviour becomes hardened and cynical, so that when worse corruption at national level is exposed, we hardly care. Rot begins with a small, innocent-looking spot, and spreads.

Labour is guilty this time. But there are lessons for the Tories. First, these things happen in one-party regimes. Second, council junketing is the sort of thing second-raters get up to. Why don't we have more first-rate people in local government? Because the Government has steadily stripped it of power.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Marconi sale dismays world scholars

Sir: Christie's statement that its sale of the GEC-Marconi archive on 24 and 25 April has been arranged as part of the company's centenary "celebrations" makes dismal reading.

Guglielmo Marconi's daughter, Princess Elettra Marconi Giovanelli, is understandably appalled, and scholars across the world await with dismay what they see as the almost inevitable dispersal of a collection of unparalleled importance for the early history of radio communications.

By the very nature of Marconi's innovation, the 5,000 documents and 300 artefacts whose sale is planned are part of an international heritage. But the case for their remaining in England, where Marconi chose to perform his most creative work and where his close collaborator, J.A. Fleming, developed his thermionic valve, is overwhelming. A way must be found.

Time is short. But GEC-Marconi's public relations director has surely misapprehended what he describes as "the public interest". That interest does not reside in a public auction and the sale of a promised CD-Rom on the life and work of Marconi designed for schools and libraries. It resides squarely in a review of the company's decision and a determined effort by everyone concerned to secure the deposit of the papers and objects in conditions that will ensure their permanent availability to historians and the general public.

ROBERT FOX  
Professor of the History of Science  
Oxford

Sir: The disposal of the early archives of the Marconi company ("Marconi auction signals and historic museum collection", 10 February) would be an act of vandalism.

The value of any archive of papers accumulated in the course of business depends on keeping it together: as a whole it can tell us vastly more than its parts individually, and in this case the proposal to sell it in a thousand lots means that much would vanish entirely from sight.

Happily it is not too late to work out a more enlightened strategy that would keep together not only the papers but also the associated objects - the whole is a collection of immense historical and scientific importance.

It seems that little has been done to explore possible means of keeping it together in this country. However, its export to a caring institution abroad would be infinitely preferable to its dispersal.

Professor P.D. HARVEY  
Chairman, British Records Association  
Durham

### New homes must be sustainable

Sir: Peter Popham's article on planning for the nation's projected 4.4 million new households is timely, but sadly misrepresents the issue as a classic "environment versus development" debate (analysis, 11 February).

The "environmentalists" opponents of conventional development projects are not



standing against social progress. Their prime motivation is the concept of sustainable development, which aims to meet human needs worldwide and for future generations while keeping within the ecological capacity of the planet. Protest against unsustainable development is essentially about protecting mankind.

Moreover, development to meet community needs is very much on the agenda of environmental activists, as seen at last year's Pure Genius land occupation in Wansworth, and in rural low-impact settlements such as Kingshill and Tinker's Bubble in Somerset. The real environmental authoritarianism lies with the Government, which has repeatedly used the planning system to block such attempts at people-based sustainability and enforced its own profit-based rationale for development.

The key challenge for the planning system is not so much the UK's household projections as the need fully to assimilate the green agenda. Too much of the current system perpetuates high-impact development, and merely determines the location of otherwise unsustainable land uses.

If this continues, we may look back more sympathetically on the "tree people", as rising seas lap the homes and gardens of Professor Hall's next generation of Milton Keynes.

Sir: Peter Popham ("Milton Keynes Multiplied", 11 February) quotes Peter Hall's concept of more new towns like Milton Keynes, linked by existing or proposed railway lines.

On the face of it this looks like sound and sustainable stuff. The trouble is that Milton Keynes is so spread out that almost every activity involves a journey, usually by car: hardly sustainable in the generally accepted meaning of conserving resources.

Our priority is seeking to accommodate lots of new - if smaller - households in a look first at our existing towns and cities, which have been catastrophically denuded of people. Compact communities, where the necessities and pleasures of life are close at hand, are not only more sustainable than those that are spread out - the best of them are, for many people, much the best places to live.

Let's upgrade all parts of all our towns and cities for all their citizens before we start squandering resources on another round of car-orientated dispersal.

HARLEY SHERLOCK  
London EC1

### Better late than never?

Sir: I can cap Dr Richard Mayne's amusing piece of computerised letter-writing (letter, 10 February) with a more macabre example. A year after my wife, M.C. James, died, a letter arrived from an insurance company addressed to "M.C. James Deceased Esq", and it began: "Dear Mr Deceased."

ROGER JAMES  
Southsea, Hampshire

### Ban on screening unfair to men

Sir: It has become a cliché in articles about prostate specific antigen (PSA) screening to quote the undisputed fact that many men who harbour malignant cells in their prostate die of something else before the prostate cancer kills them ("Prostate screening ruled out by NHS", 7 February).

Some doctors go on to argue that PSA screening is uneconomic or positively harmful, because it identifies men who may not be destined to die of the disease and spreads anxiety (and presumably would cost the NHS money).

The only way that this cancer can be cured is if it is diagnosed at an early stage while it is still confined in the prostate. While this may be discovered by accident, the only deliberate way of testing for the possibility of the disease is by PSA.

Because many men do not die of the disease, the NHS concludes that early diagnosis should be denied. The consequence is that the 8,500 men who will die from prostate cancer every year in this country should not be cured - ie the NHS is refusing to cure many people bound to die painfully because a larger number with the same disease will die of something else. This is terrible logic, cannot be good medicine and is surely immoral.

The US Federal Government some years ago commissioned an exhaustive study of PSA testing

from a public health point of view which took a very hard look at the economics of national PSA screening.

The study, which is publicly available, basically concluded that so long as the treatment was nationally as effective as it was at the better medical centres, PSA testing was economic and could be supported by Medicare.

JEROME GOLDSTEIN  
London W1

### Pupils too must carry the can

Sir: You say that John Major intends to sack teachers whose pupils fail to match up to national standards ("Bad results in cost jobs of teachers", 12 February). Doesn't the Conservative Party believe in personal responsibility any more?

Twenty years ago a pupil of mine got caught at St John's College May Ball twice, and was then arrested whilst trying to steal a bicycle. His tutor rescued him from the cells, pleading that he was due to sit an examination that morning. The pupil fell asleep, and failed his O-level.

If behaviour like this is to result in the sacking of a teacher rather than the punishment of the pupil, won't it encourage all students to do the same?

Rev TOM AMBROSE  
Director of Communications  
Diocese of Ely  
Ely, Cambridgeshire

### Weighty issue of the female brain

Sir: Your reply to the question (Technoquest, 10 February) concerning the differences between the male and female brain was illuminating. "Female brains are on average 10 per cent smaller than male brains." So far, so good. No one has yet produced a reliable correlation between human brain size and intelligence, so no need for us all to panic at this revelation. So why did you?

Why put in the totally irrelevant comment that "women's bodies are, on average, more than 10 per cent lighter than men's, so their brain weight is a higher percentage of the whole body." So what? Do you suggest that fat people are intellectually inferior to thin people? Or Americans to Chinese? Dr E.AGER  
Exmouth, Devon

### African kwaggas

Sir: An article about "zebras" ("What happens when a donkey meets a zebra", 6 February) stated that the two zebras in Britain, Zed and Zee, were believed to be the only ones in the world outside the United States.

A species in South Africa, known as "kwaggas", has been in existence for a number of years. Kwaggas had been extinct since the last century, but scientists experimenting with donkey-zebra combinations managed to reproduce them.

The animals can be seen in a game reserve at Stellenbosch near Cape Town.

LAURA ATTWOOD  
London NW10

### Minimum wage helps small firms

Sir: Your leading article of 11 February suggested that some jobs in small businesses would be lost as a result of a national minimum wage. It should also be pointed out that a minimum wage would protect many small businesses from the predatory pricing policies of larger competitors.

I met a couple who run a fish and chip shop. Their employees are mostly members of their own family and they earn decent wages. A few months ago a fast food chain set up an outlet opposite their shop. The workers there are paid only £2 per hour. Because their labour costs are lower, the fast food chain can undercut them, and they will be out of business next year.

The cruellest irony is that this family is paying taxes to subsidise through the benefit system the low wages paid by the fast food chain. If a Labour government ends this scam it will do us all a favour.

Dr MARK RAYTON  
Lewes, East Sussex

Sir: Your leading article about New Labour's appeal to the small business community (11 February) has failed to understand what is happening.

Jack Woolley, long a stalwart of the Bournemouth Tory Party, is too old to change to New Labour now. On the other hand, more youthful businessmen such as Simon Pemberton may see things differently. That, indeed, is why Pemberton took on the role of Bournemouth organiser for New Labour last year.

It was this act which led the Grundys, formerly subalterns of the Bournemouth constituency GMC, to depart for Arthur Scargill's SLP and, in turn, caused Pemberton's efforts to evict them from Grange Farm.

Much of this has, of course, remained hidden from listeners to *The Archers*, but it is the stuff of street conversation in north London where many of those who live in Ambridge have second homes.

KEITH FLEET  
London N17

### Press button 1 for salvation

Sir: Faced with overcapacity, disappearing customers and no possibility of diversifying, the Church of England might have to take a lead from other big businesses caught in the same trap - close branches, downsize to a core, sell peripherals and real estate ("Rumors and the lung melancholy rum", 10 February).

This would finance redundancies in the field and a new small organisation at Lambeth with a catchy title, staffed by a few bishops. Some would handle advertising of the Christian message by all usual means, including telephone and maildrop. The rest would run a Freefone helpline.

Suppliants might be answered: "Hello, thank you for calling ABC. If you seek salvation, press 1. To discuss remission of your sins, press 2. For Bible queries, press 3. We cannot help with dreams of avarice but if you press the Star key and then 666 you will be connected to Mammon, a division of your local water company."

In all seriousness, if the above process works for the business world, why not for religion? GRAHAM HOLDEN  
Buddleigh Salterton, Devon

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.  
Fax: 0171-293 2056 e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk  
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



## Fisk in Ireland: Part 2

# Heaven, hell and Irish politics

In the second of his reports on Northern Ireland, *The Independent's* award-winning war reporter Robert Fisk finds no love lost and no sign of a way ahead between Gerry Adams and Ian Paisley



There was a gin and tonic on the bar table and the former Northern Ireland Office official, features as gnarled as his cynicism, a Protestant as brutally honest about his own people as he is about Catholics, was waiting for me in his usual Belfast haunt. A quarter century ago, he would curse my pessimism. Now he was worse than me; and I was shocked. "Boh, I've never seen such sectarian hatred. You know, I was talking to a senior policeman the other day about Drumcree. He had been working for Chief Constable Annesley - whom we called 'the eternal flame' because he never went out - and I told this policeman that it all ended last summer at Drumcree when the RUC let the Protestants march through the Catholic streets. I said to him there was no way forward since the loyalists set aside the

rule of law at Drumcree. It proved for everyone that the Protestants, when they take to the streets, have more power than the law." Drumcree has become a millstone of Northern Ireland history, like Bloody Sunday in Derry or the Protestant Ulster Workers' Council strike that brought down the power-sharing Belfast government in 1974. In 1972, Bloody Sunday destroyed finally and forever the British Army's credibility among Catholics. And Drumcree, in the early summer of last year, destroyed the last shreds of Catholic hope that the RUC could be trusted. Sometimes I suspect that Ulstermen take pride in these epic disasters. I must have been told a hundred times - with pride, of course - that it was the men of east Belfast who built the *Titanic*.

And like that state-of-the-art White Star liner, my old friend with the gin and tonic could see his province sinking ever deeper into its grave. There was a terrible irony in all this. This same man - a trusted confidant of British officials - would abuse me for suggesting that Protestants could not live alongside Catholics, for ignoring Protestants suffering at the hands of the IRA. Yet just a few hours earlier, I had been walking up the Falls Road in the rain, listening to the political representative of that very same IRA as he insisted that peace could be obtained, that the British could bring it about - if only

they would face up to Unionism. It was a droll conversation I had with Gerry Adams at the corner of Finaghy Road North as his bodyguard, pale green shades wrapped around his face, scanned each passing car with the moonbeam eye of a man looking for a gun barrel. Watching Adams, I kept thinking about war. And he kept talking about peace.

"We took the British by surprise when we declared our ceasefire. They had a problem. They were saying that the war was being contained. And all of a sudden we were suing for peace - and it was out of their control. And so they wanted to slow it down, to forget the consensus that our peace was creating. And that's why, after we had a ceasefire, there was an attempt to create new conditions. I knew we would reach that fatal phrase, the 'decommissioning of weapons'. I remember when I learnt of it over the BBC in Beirut - where the civil war militias were allowed to bury their guns on the promise that the future peace would make them irrelevant, turn them into museum pieces, like the civil war swords on the walls of English pubs.

"When I first heard of 'decommissioning', I asked Martin McGuinness what it meant," Adams said. (McGuinness was a gentleman who had a different role when I last met him 25 years ago in Derry, one rather closely associated with Armalite rifles.) "Well, McGuinness went through the dictionaries and couldn't find the word. Then at last he said it means 'taking out of commission'. And still I don't know what that means. It's an issue - I talked to Mayhew about it. But he never had any expectation of slow it down, to forget the consensus that our peace was creating. And that's why, after we had a ceasefire, there was an attempt to create new conditions. I knew we would reach that fatal phrase, the 'decommissioning of weapons'. I remember when I learnt of it over the BBC in Beirut - where the civil war militias were allowed to bury their guns on the promise that the future peace would make them irrelevant, turn them into museum pieces, like the civil war swords on the walls of English pubs.

British public opinion." But you did, I said, at Canary Wharf last year. And Adams's head turned suddenly towards me. He didn't like the "you". And he wanted to see if I was joking. I wasn't. "I'm talking about political engagement," he said and on we walked, a little faster than before, as if the rain were getting heavier. It wasn't.

How easy it is for those Americans who have supported the military "efficiency" of the IRA to forget, as John Hume has acidly observed, that while 87 per cent of civilian fatalities in the past 25 years have been killed by nationalist or "loyalist" paramilitaries, more than one in two of all dead IRA men were killed by their own hand. What kind of an outfit is this that the British are so afraid of, I kept asking myself?

But then again, we sometimes ask why the militarily powerful Israelis are so apprehensive of a few thousand Hizbollah men in southern Lebanon. Is this because Israel needs an excuse to stay in southern Lebanon? Does Britain need an excuse to delay the peace process?

There are more parallels. We journalists experience a little hesitation in pointing out the flaws in a "peace process". Suggest that the Middle East

**6 I will never sit down with Adams. He'd sit with the devil 9 - Paisley**

he'd get his way. The point is that for a peace to work, it has to 'click'. It hasn't yet 'clicked' with the British.

Now I could think of quite a lot of clicking - of a rather different kind - that had come from the IRA over the past quarter century. And I wasn't very impressed with the political *mes culpas* that came from Gerry Adams. "One of the things we've failed to do," he said brightly, "is engage with

Drumcree was the fault of the nationalists - "the IRA had infiltrated the Garvaghy Road area" - and Catholics who remember Bloody Sunday should recall that two Protestant civilians were later killed by the same Parachute Regiment, which was why Dr Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party had refused to attend the Derry talks that led to the power-

sharing executive. The worst moment of the last 25 years was not Bloody Sunday but the IRA slaughter of 20 civilians at Enniskillen.

But at one point, Dr Paisley said something that could have been uttered by that most famous of all nationalist politicians, John Hume. Hume had told me 24 hours earlier that "in many ways what we need is a Unionist de Klerk - there are parallels between the South African situation and our own."

And now Dr Paisley said to me: "I would settle for what happened in South Africa - they got it by the maintenance of the Union of South Africa, and by majority vote." But fear not, reader, the teeth were still intact in the old dog.

## Personal Equity Plans

Saturday 15th February 1997

The Independent's "Long Weekend" section will be publishing a comprehensive survey on Personal Equity Plans.

The survey will identify what they are and who should consider them.

It will also define the different types of PEPs available and include a table of the leading providers.

THE INDEPENDENT

## Whisky and the spirit of the purist

Yesterday I said that the Scotch Whisky Association was being a bit unfair. They were taking a Manx whisky firm called Glen Kella to court for putting the name "whiskey" on their product. The SWA's objection is that Glen Kella distills the "whiskey" before bottling it, and the SWA says that you shouldn't do things to whisky after it leaves the cask. So I said that this was unfair because the Scotch whisky industry itself tampers with whisky before bottling it.

This brought me a quiet phone call yesterday from the wise men of the legal department at *The Independent*, hinting that I should not say such things unless I had some evidence to back it up. Oh, but I had, I said. (Not often I can say this.) Why, only the other day in the *Financial Times*, Roderick Oram was writing as follows:

"For decades Scotch producers have put their spirit through further processes after the cask. First, they dilute the spirit from cask strength of about 60 per cent alcohol by

volume to 40 per cent with demineralised water. Then sometimes a little caramel is added to darken the colour. Lastly, before bottling, the spirit is cooled to about 0°C and filtered to remove fatty acids. These are taken out to prevent the 'chill haze' that can occur when whisky gets very cold."

(Whisky, I think, would be a clear liquid if left to its own devices. The colouring comes from the casks in which they chose to store it. I once met a man high up in the organisation that makes Cutty Sark whisky, who bemoaned to me the fact that Cutty Sark was a clearish whisky. "I'm sure we'd sell twice as much if it was darker, as people suppose whisky should be, but it wouldn't be any better a whisky if we darkened it," he sighed.)

The situation seems clear. If you want to alter the whisky after it leaves the cask, you must never do what Glen Kella is doing to it. You must only do all the things that the SWA permits people to do it. And yet, reports Mr Oram, not all experts are happy with the situation. "Scotch purists like their

spirit cask strength and unfiltered. I do love getting some of the stuff straight from the cask," says a senior Speyside distiller. "The chill filter is a compromise. It keeps the Scotch clear but it takes out some of the mouth-feel, the wonderful rounded feeling of the whisky."

Now I have met some of these Scotch purists and they certainly know what they are talking about. You could meet them too if you went to Edinburgh and wandered down the Royal Mile until you came to a shop called The Whisky Shop. The first time I came to it I went in and asked for a bottle of Laphroaig, that strange smoky, peaty malt whisky from the islands.



Miles Kingston

"Do you want our Laphroaig or their Laphroaig?" asked the man. I didn't know what he meant. So he explained to me then the very same thing that Roderick Oram was saying in the *Financial Times* - that when a distillery markets its own malt whisky, it isn't giving you the stuff straight from the cask. It's doing a bit of filtering and a bit of colouring and a bit of this and that. But The Whisky Shop is run by a firm of bottlers called Cadenhead's who for nearly 200 years have been in the business of buying casks straight from distilleries and bottling what is in the cask without changing it.

"So you can see, sir, that our Glen Whatever malt whisky is more authentic than the whisky that comes from the Glen Whatever distillery. We don't make changes to it. They do."

In all the times that I have been there, or to their shop in Covent Garden, I have never heard Cadenhead's make the risky claim that their straight-from-the-cask stuff is better than the stuff that Glen Whatever fiddles around with.

"You may well prefer the cooled, filtered, dyed whisky," they say. "That's up to you. All we say is that we bottle straight from the cask, and they don't."

I don't suppose for a moment that Cadenhead's would feel like emulating Glen Kella's process of redistilling. But I think they would feel a smidgen of sympathy for any firm which is descended on by the weight of the big whisky boys, as they have been in the past. Oh yes, Glen Whatever has, in the past, tried - and failed - to get the law to stop Cadenhead's from bottling and selling Glen Whatever under that name, even though it was more authentic than the stuff put out by Glen Whatever.

I'm not sure I want to start drinking Glen Kella whisky. But I can't help hoping that David comes out ahead of Goliath on this one.


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Crime Bill will



Please send me more information about how I can help animals like  
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 **THE BLUE CROSS**



# business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Bank tells Clarke to act now

Yvette Cooper and  
Diane Coyle

The Bank of England warned again yesterday that interest rates should rise, as official figures revealed a further big drop in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit and a faster pace of average earnings growth. The warning came hours after Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer, insisted that no increase in rates was necessary.

**'The longer you delay, the more interest rates will have to go up'**

meant the prospects were for strong consumer demand and investment growth. The Bank has revised down its short-term inflation forecast because of the strong pound, but revised up the outlook two years ahead. It puts the target measure at 3 per cent and is rising to 1998.

Mr King said: "The rise in the pound does help push inflation lower in the short term." But he gave a clear signal the Bank thinks the Chancellor should have already increased the cost of borrowing. "We are in an upturn and it will be normal for interest rates to rise. They are at the same level as they were in the middle of last year."

The report concluded: "The Bank continues to see the need for a moderate tightening of policy." On Tuesday night Howard Davies, the Bank's deputy governor, had signalled that a quarter point rise to 6.25 per cent would do the trick.

The tone of yesterday's Inflation Report was not quite as tough as Mr King's comments. It pointed out the Bank's forecast for inflation is actually more optimistic than many others.

Even so, there were mixed reactions to the Bank's fresh call

for higher borrowing costs. Mr Clarke was not the only person to reject this as unnecessary.

"Sterling's rise will hit exports, slowing the pace of growth and lowering the risks of capacity constraints," Michael Saunders at investment bank Salomon Brothers said. But other City economists backed the Bank. "The price of liquidity now is likely to be higher base rates in the longer run - a price unlikely to be paid by the current Chancellor of the Exchequer," said Adam Cole at James Capel.

The Bank's warning that the labour market was getting tighter, contributing to inflationary pressures, was borne out by new Government statistics.

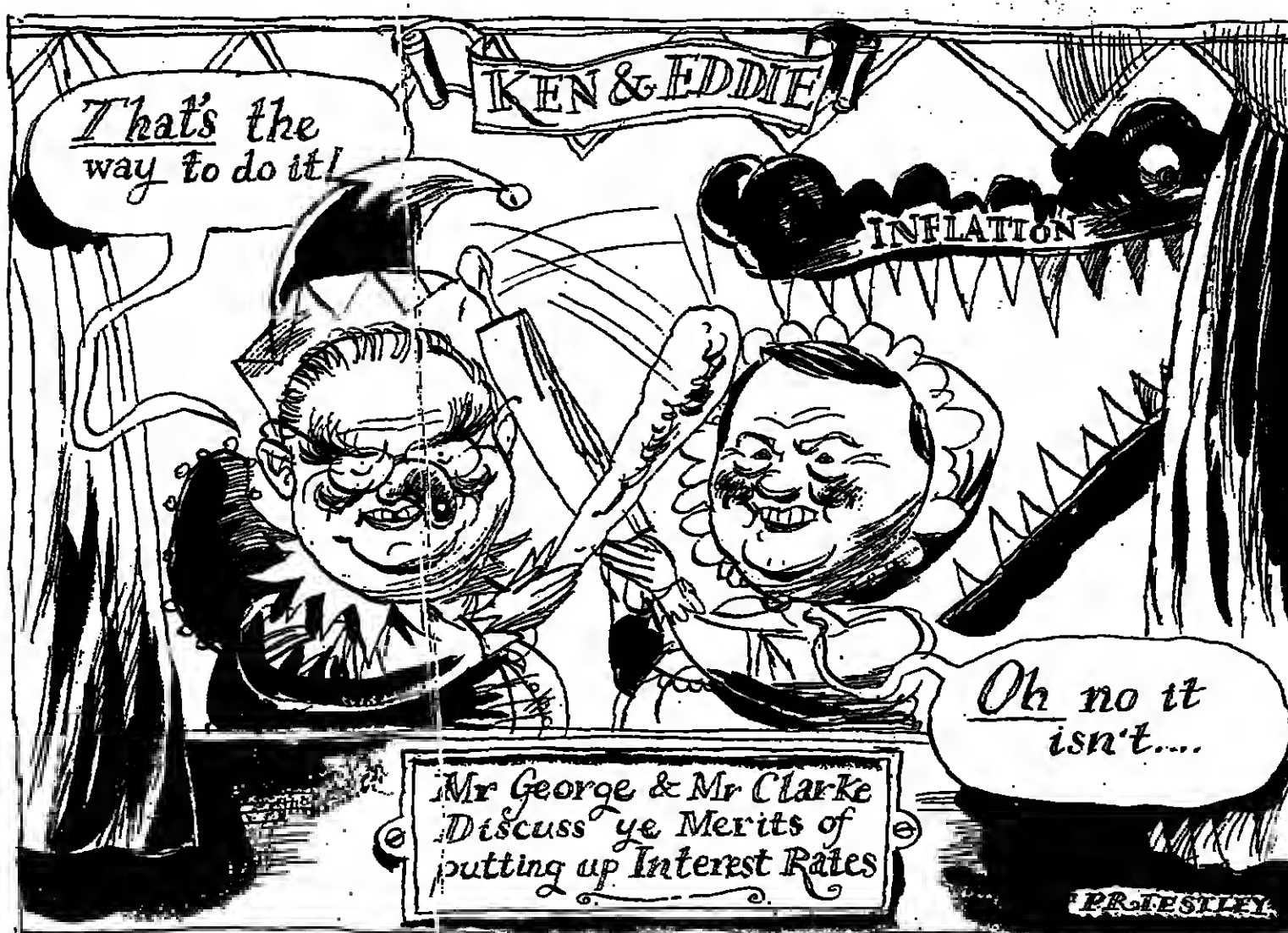
Unemployment fell by a much bigger than expected 67,800 in January, according to the Government's figures, leaving 1,385,300 men and 430,000 women still on the dole. The claimant count has now fallen by a record average of 70,000 a month over the past three months pushing the unemployment rate down to 6.5 per cent - 1 percentage point above the lowest level in April 1990.

Eric Fowth, employment minister, said the 6 per cent barrier was in sight. However, officials admitted the recent introduction of the Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) means the figures cannot be relied upon as an estimate of the number of people leaving unemployment for new jobs.

According to Simon Briscoe, an economist at Nikko, the changes "have made the interpretation of the monthly unemployment figures impossible". The more reliable Labour Force Survey shows unemployment falling at a much slower rate.

But other indicators suggest the labour market is tightening, as the Bank claims. Average earnings grew by 4.25 per cent in 1996, compared with 3.25 per cent in 1995. Pay settlements have hardly increased, so the rise reflects higher bonuses and overtime payments. "Earnings growth is already close to the maximum likely to be consistent with the current inflation target", David Wallis of Goldman Sachs said. "Even allowing for the JSA, these numbers suggest that the labour market is tightening much too rapidly for comfort. This carries a real danger of higher wage inflation during 1997 with consequent risks for retail price inflation in 1998."

However, the Government will find some comfort in the fact that productivity is rising and the growth in unit labour costs for companies has slowed.



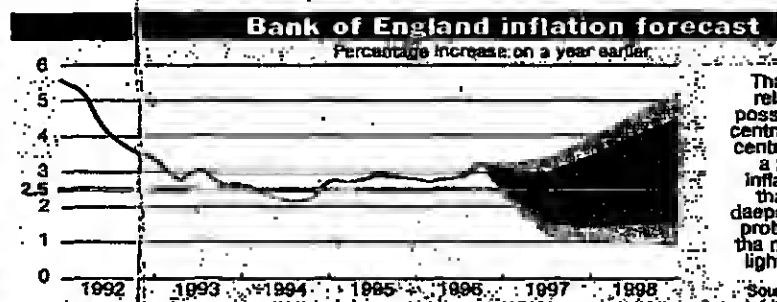
## Sterling takes a breather in rates debate

It should have been no surprise that there was a pause in the recent steep climb in the pound on a day when the economic debate hinged almost entirely on the strength of the exchange rate. Its index against other currencies closed at the same level, 98.2, as the previous day, writes Diane Coyle.

Even so, sterling has increased by 16 per cent in value since last August, and remains at about the level from which it tumbled out of the exchange rate mechanism on 16 September 1992. The exchange rate is the fault-line currently dividing the interest rate hawk from the doves.

There is no question that a strong pound will tend to reduce inflation and erode the UK's trade position. What is hotly disputed, in the corridors of power and City alike, is whether it is therefore a good enough substitute for higher interest rates.

That is certainly Kenneth Clarke's view. He has emphasised the impact the exchange rate will have on exports and



manufacturing as a counterweight to robust consumer demand. The business community agrees, with a succession of companies this year having complained about weaker export prospects.

Ian Peters, deputy director general of the British Chambers of Commerce, said yesterday that a rise in base rates would "fuel the fire" under the pound. Mervyn King, the Bank of England's chief economist, said the Bank's new

inflation forecast took account of sterling's strength. This was why he had revised down the forecast for the next few months. He added that the exchange rate appreciation posed a dilemma: domestic demand would expand too fast if the Chancellor did not raise rates, or export demand would suffer if he did.

A lengthy section of yesterday's Inflation Report sets out the textbook analysis of a strong exchange rate. The Bank reckons a mix of reasons lies behind the pound's current strength: the expectation that UK interest rates will rise relative to US and European rates, the impact of government budget cuts on the Continent in reducing market interest rates across the Channel, and the increase in oil prices.

The Bank's forecast incorporates both the one-off effect of a higher exchange rate on the price level via lower import prices, reducing measured inflation rates for 12 months, and the longer-lasting impact via reduced exports and higher imports. But it assumes, based on financial market expectations, that sterling's index will fall to about 91 within two years. Mr King said: "There is nothing remotely odd or controversial about this view."

Roger Bootle, chief economist at HSBC Markets and one of the Treasury's "wise persons" disagreed. "These supposedly one-off shocks have a way of carrying on. The pound will be a powerful disinflationary force," he said.

## US court throws out case over De Lorean

Michael Harrison

The Government was last night facing a legal bill of up to £15m after a US court threw out its \$500m lawsuit against the auditors Arthur Andersen over the collapse of the De Lorean car plant in west Belfast in 1982.

Judge M B Mukasey ruled that the Government's case - alleging conspiracy, fraud and negligence in the way Arthur Andersen audited De Lorean's accounts - could not proceed in the Southern District Court of New York. He added that the Government could still pursue some of its claims in a lower state court but if it does so it cannot claim its costs, which are estimated at £10m to £15m.

The Government began the lawsuit in 1985 - three years after the Belfast plant collapsed after having had £70m of taxpayers' money pumped into it to build John De Lorean's gull-winged sports car.

In April last year the judge dismissed the Government's claim that Arthur Andersen had violated the Racketeer Influenced Corrupt Organisations Act, under which courts can award triple damages. Then four months later it ruled sensationally that confidential Cabinet papers relating to the De Lorean affair should be made open to public inspection.

The papers showed the De Lorean project had first been approved by a Labour government and then kept alive by the Conservatives for political reasons. In dismissing the Government's claim, the judge noted that in one memorandum, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland had said it would be disastrous both politically and commercially to pull the plug on the company at this stage.

The papers revealed Labour's Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason had pushed the project through Cabinet believing the investment would deal a "hammer blow" to the IRA.

Successful Conservative Secretaries of State kept the plan going, fearing that to pull out would raise question marks over continued state aid for British Leyland and the Belfast shipyard Harland and Wolff.

The judge said that the long-running lawsuit had created a "Niagara of paper" in which the Northern Ireland Department of Economic Development had shown itself to be "a singularly intractable participant".

## Water companies face swingeing price cuts

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

The privatised water companies will face the kind of big one-off cut in bills seen in the gas and electricity industries under proposals outlined yesterday by Ian Byatt, the water regulator.

The plans, which will form part of a new price-cap regime from 2000, will also put further pressure on water shareholders by pledging that bills will not increase in real terms in the years that follow the initial price reduction.

Mr Byatt said the next set of price controls would have to make up for efficiency gains made by companies in the current price regime, which began in 1995 and was due to last until 2005. He has since decided to introduce a new formula from 2000 after several of the 10 big water and sewerage groups failed to meet their investment targets. In 1995-96 their capital spending fell short

of the £2.6bn target in the price formula by £300m.

Mr Byatt said the water companies had "reported significant savings since the last review of price limits". He continued: "I propose to transfer these savings to customers at the next review through an initial downward adjustment of real prices."

Though Mr Byatt's department, Ofwat, has not fixed a figure for price cuts, it is taking a lead from the electricity and gas industries where recent price packages have provoked furious responses from the companies involved. British Gas has taken its campaign against a 20 per cent one-off cut planned by the watchdog, Ofgas, to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Ofwat also made clear that water groups could not expect to see above-inflation increases in bills in later years, reversing the previous pricing policy which allowed the cost of the

huge investment backlog in the industry to be passed directly through to customers.

He said: "I will expect companies to demonstrate improving standards for customers and efficiency gains will allow price to come down in real terms, despite continuing capital investment requirements."

David Luffman, finance director of Thames Water, admitted the new formula would be "tough" to comply with. Thames was the only water company which recently refused Mr Byatt's request to soften price increases next year because its investment had not matched Ofwat targets.

"This is a nice objective but the reality has to be that it depends on the scale of the service improvements demanded. You can't have an open consultation process and prejudice the matter," Mr Luffman said.

He said the final price cap must depend on whether the European Commission tight-



Turning off the taps: Ian Byatt is determined to cut bills

ened controls on drinking water standards, requiring companies to make further investments. "If Europe conjures another shopping list of improvements then the process has to be flexible."

In another innovation, Mr Byatt is to appoint an advisory board of senior industrialists, mirroring a similar move by Don Cruickshank, the telephone regulator.

## BA claims tie-up will benefit rivals by £613m

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Boh Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, yesterday stepped up his defence of the group's planned alliance with American Airlines, claiming rival carriers would see benefits in revenue growth worth £1bn (£613m) as a result.

At a speech to mark the tenth anniversary of BA's flotation, Mr Ayling claimed services between Heathrow and the USA would grow by a fifth if the alliance partners had to give up some of their lucrative runway slots at the airport under proposals from the Office of Fair Trading. The OFT says the tie-up could escape a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission if the partners had to divest 168 slots, equivalent to twelve daily round-trip flights.

Mr Ayling said the new services would come when the UK and US concluded an "open skies" agreement to liberalise access to Heathrow Airport. Rounding out critics of the strategy, which has linked approval for the alliance to the successful outcome of the talks, he said: "It may not please our competitors, nor the purists among the competition authorities, but in the real world it offers the only chance of real progress."

The alliance involves BA and American going beyond simple "code-sharing" arrangements to a deal where the two airlines pool revenues and facilities. Rival carriers in the US have launched an unprecedented attack on the link-up, which would give BA and American 60 per cent of UK-US flight capacity.

Mr Ayling's remarks were seen by other airlines last night as an attempt to back up his insistence that British Airways should only give up Heathrow slots if it gets financial compensation. Experts have estimated that the proposed 168 slots, which amount to almost all the slots currently allocated

to American Airlines, could net BA £180m.

The debate over slot trading has become crucial to the successful conclusion of the alliance after European Commissioners said the practice of selling the slots was illegal under Commission rules.

But rival carriers doubted BA's claim that services would grow by 20 per cent from the slot divestiture plans. A spokesman for United Airlines said: "We frankly doubt whether BA and American are doing this in order to cut their own share of the market. From their point of view that doesn't make sense."

Other US airlines have pointed out that BA and American would still be left with more than 3,000 slots at Heathrow. They have also claimed that other facilities, including security checks, baggage handling and departure gates, are in such short supply that the open skies deal would in practice lead to little growth in flight capacity.

STOCK MARKETS				
FTSE 100	Dow Jones	Nikkei	Hang Seng	Hong Kong
4340	7070	17600	12400	12400
4320	6990	18200	12400	12400
4290	6910	18200	12400	12400
4260	6830	18200	12400	12400
4230	6750	18200	12400	12400
4200	6670	18200	12400	12400
4170	6590	18200	12400	12400
4140	6510	18200	12400	12400

INTEREST RATES				
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	3M US	6M US
6.44	7.12	7.12	7.12	7.12
6.18	6.86	6.86	6.86	6.86
5.92	6.60	6.60	6.60	6.60
5.66	6.34	6.34	6.34	6.34
5.40	6.08	6.08	6.08	6.08
5.14	5.82	5.82	5.82	5.82
4.88	5.56	5.56	5.56	5.56
4.62	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.30
4.36	5.04	5.04	5.04	5.04

CURRENCIES				
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥	DM/\$	¥/\$
1.65	2.78	161.00	1.65	161.00
1.64	2.77	161.00	1.64	161.00
1.63	2.76	161.00	1.63	161.00
1.62	2.75	161.00	1.62	161.00
1.61	2.74	161.00	1.61	161.00
1.60	2.73	161.00	1.60	161.00
1.59	2.72	161.00	1.59	161.00
1.58	2.71	161.00	1.58	161.00
1.57	2.70	161.00	1.57	161.00

MAIN PRICE CHANGES					
Stocks	Price (p)	Change (p)	Price (p)	Change (p)	
BTG	516.5	+5.5	BTG	516.5	+5.5
Reuters Holdings	24.5	+0.5	Reuters Holdings	24.5	+0.5
Chubb Security	341	+11.5	Chubb Security	341	+11.5
Premier Oil	38.5	+2.0	Premier Oil	38.5	+2.0
BTG	516.5	+5.5	BTG	516.5	+5.5
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Money Market Rates			Bond Yields *			
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Default Spread (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) yr Ago
UK	6.12	6.68	7.12	7.61	7.20	7.77
US	5.28	5.61	6.41	5.57	6.71	6.41
Japan	0.41	0.43	7.40	8.87		
Germany	3.12	3.12	5.56	6.08	6.36	
*Benchmark indices						

MAIN PRICE CHANGES							
Issues	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change (%)	Faiths	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
BTG	516.5	45	9.5	RAI	180	11.5	6.4
Reuters Holdings	890.5	24.5	3	Reis-Rovce	220	12.5	5.0

CURRENCIES				
£/\$	£/DM	£/¥		
<p>1.65</p> <p>1.60</p> <p>1.55</p> <p>1.50</p> <p>1.45</p> <p>1.40</p> <p>1.35</p> <p>1.30</p> <p>1.25</p> <p>1.20</p> <p>1.15</p> <p>1.10</p> <p>1.05</p> <p>1.00</p> <p>0.95</p> <p>0.90</p> <p>0.85</p> <p>0.80</p> <p>0.75</p> <p>0.70</p> <p>0.65</p> <p>0.60</p> <p>0.55</p> <p>0.50</p> <p>0.45</p> <p>0.40</p> <p>0.35</p> <p>0.30</p> <p>0.25</p> <p>0.20</p> <p>0.15</p> <p>0.10</p> <p>0.05</p> <p>0.00</p>	<p>2.78</p> <p>2.74</p> <p>2.70</p> <p>2.66</p> <p>2.62</p> <p>2.58</p> <p>2.54</p> <p>2.50</p> <p>2.46</p> <p>2.42</p> <p>2.38</p> <p>2.34</p> <p>2.30</p> <p>2.26</p> <p>2.22</p> <p>2.18</p> <p>2.14</p> <p>2.10</p> <p>2.06</p> <p>2.02</p> <p>1.98</p> <p>1.94</p> <p>1.90</p> <p>1.86</p> <p>1.82</p> <p>1.78</p> <p>1.74</p> <p>1.70</p> <p>1.66</p> <p>1.62</p> <p>1.58</p> <p>1.54</p> <p>1.50</p> <p>1.46</p> <p>1.42</p> <p>1.38</p> <p>1.34</p> <p>1.30</p> <p>1.26</p> <p>1.22</p> <p>1.18</p> <p>1.14</p> <p>1.10</p> <p>1.06</p> <p>1.02</p> <p>0.98</p> <p>0.94</p> <p>0.90</p> <p>0.86</p> 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Pound			Dollar				
Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago		
£ (London)	1.6335	-0.008	1.5344	£ (London)	0.6122	+0.33	0.6521
£ (New York)	1.6140	-0.256	1.5373	£ (New York)	0.6196	+0.86	0.6505
DM (London)	2.7495	+0.334	2.2866	DM (London)	1.6632	+1.11	1.4782
¥ (London)	163.30	+0.37	164.020	¥ (London)	128.845	+0.775	106.965
¥ (London)	128.845	+0.775	106.965	¥ (London)	108.3	+0.9	96.2

OTHER INDICATORS								
Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest Yr Ago	Next Pts			
Oil Brent \$	21.08	-0.1	17.79	154.4	+2.5pc	150.6	13 Feb	
Gold \$	340.75	-2.1	402.20	RPI	198.9	+2.3pc	195.7	27 Jan
				GDP	106.8	+2.3pc	105.7	27 Jan

Gold L					208.50	+2.41	252.29	Basis Rates	- 6.00pc	6.75	-
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<div>135A</div>											

£200m property deal boosts Heron recovery					
Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Latest Yr Ago	
£ (London)	1.6335	-0.008	1.5344	0.6122	+0.33
£ (New York)	1.6140	-0.256	1.5373	0.6196	+0.86
DM (London)	2.7495	+0.334	2.2866	1.6632	+1.11pc
¥ (London)	163.30	+0.37	164.020	128.845	+0.775
¥ (London)	128.845	+0.775	106.965	108.3	+0.9

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**COMMENT**  
Mr Clarke thinks he can sit back and enjoy the election campaign because the strong pound will stop inflation in its tracks

## We need higher taxes, not higher interest rates

The row between the Bank of England and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has reached alarmingly dramatic proportions. But even so, the Bank has diplomatically refrained from pointing out that it would not be calling for higher interest rates in this public fashion if Mr Clarke had tamed the economy with a tougher Budget.

The problem is that the Chancellor is trying to use one weapon - interest rates - to target two enemies. One is inflation, the other the over-strong exchange rate. One requires higher borrowing costs to keep it on target in the medium term and sustain steady growth. The other requires lower borrowing costs to protect exports and balance the recovery between domestic and external demand.

Mr Clarke's claim is that these two enemies actually neutralise each other so he doesn't need to worry. He can sit back and enjoy the election campaign because the strong pound will stop inflation in its tracks. To be fair, a respectable number of economists agree with this, including Martin Weale of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, a scourge of the Government's budget performance. The Chancellor's supporters on interest rates reckon the pound will have a big enough effect on exports and imports to dampen growth to a pace consistent with meeting the inflation target.

There are plenty of economists, however, who share the Bank's view that relying on the exchange rate is no substitute for actively bringing the economy under control. In their

view domestic demand growth is buoyant enough to outweigh the strong pound's effect on trade. Indeed, the rise in sterling, by cutting import prices, will itself help boost consumer purchasing power and spending. An exchange rate appreciation does not always lead to an economic downturn. It depends what else is happening in the economy.

As the Bank's Mervyn King puts it, there is no simple rule relating exchange rates to interest rates. Unlike the base rate, the pound is not an economic policy lever.

All this would be a matter entirely for academic debate if Mr Clarke had used fiscal policy to limit likely consumer spending growth. Further income tax cuts in April are the last thing the economy needs, and without them the Bank might not be pushing for its quarter point rise in base rates. This, rather than the monthly monetary meeting, is where politics is really intruding into the management of the economy. Higher taxes, not higher interest rates, is what Britain really needs, but nobody's going to admit that in the run up to an election.

### The truth behind the Euro-pensions scare

Europe's pensions muddle has provided a wonderful ammunition for the euro-phobes. Essentially, the argument is that the Maastricht criteria for joining the single currency should reflect the enormous future pen-

sions burden faced by countries such as France, Germany and Italy. If these liabilities were included in state borrowing figures, their public finances would look such a sorry mess compared with the UK that nobody could possibly hope to qualify.

The most recent eruption of the scare came when the Commons social services committee said last October that British taxpayers could end up subsidising the unfunded pension liabilities of other member states. Either the European central bank would have to relax policy by printing money, or countries that could not afford their pension liabilities would try to borrow their way out of a tight corner. This would raise the yield on euro bonds and damage investment and employment in the UK, even though its pension costs are under control.

Now along comes the Action Centre for Europe to explode this view. It points out that the Maastricht Treaty prevents the kind of political interference that would force the central bank into printing money, for pensions or anything else.

The stability pact would also guard against the risk of a surge in borrowing to pay for pensions. But the Centre's most important argument is that pension promises, the cause of the problem because they are so generous in much of the EU, are not legally binding obligations, as the British government has proved since 1981 by cutting the real value of state pensions.

will not so much be to burden Britain with other people's obligations but rather to put even heavier pressure on Italy, Germany and France to cut benefits.

The argument about who pays often gets confused with the separate question of whether pensions should be funded or not. A switch to private funding of itself will not get European economies off the pensions hook. The basic economic problem is the high proportion of total national resources required to finance an ageing population, irrespective of whether the money is found from privately funded schemes or from government pay-as-you-go pensions.

The likely upshot is that state and private provision will be forced downwards. As in most other areas of social policy, Britain has led the way in the drive to impoverish the elderly. On top of lower state pensions, the UK private sector is also taking out of final salary schemes and switching to money purchase pensions, where benefits are generally much lower. The Continent looks destined to follow.

### Old King Coal is still thinking big

How they laughed at Richard Budge when he raised £815m to buy the English coalfields back in 1994. The bankers might just get their money back, they sniggered, but investors in his RJB Mining group would be skinned alive as soon as its coal contracts with

the two electricity generators expired in 1998. Well, Old King Coal has paid his debt back in double quick time and although the shares have fallen a long way from their peak, RJB is still in business. That is more than can be said for some of the other coal entrepreneurs who persuaded investors to put their money down shafts in the ground.

However, the nearer Mr Budge gets to renegotiating his coal contracts, the more nervous investors get. After all, 80 per cent of the 37 million tonnes he produces is riding on the outcome.

Mr Budge yesterday unveiled part of the solution. If some of his market disappears, then he will just go out and create a new one by building a £300m power station based on clean coal technology. The 400 megawatt plant next to Kellingley Colliery in West Yorkshire would consume 1 million tonnes of coal a year and would, says RJB, produce electricity at 3p a kilowatt hour.

Mr Budge has been persuasive enough to get Tetracon on board as a partner. The Americans have had a slightly smaller power station based on the same technology up and running in Tampa, Florida since last December. As his coalfields bid demonstrated, Mr Budge likes to think big. Kellingley, he says is only the beginning, there is a £500m market out there for power stations of this type, particularly as the Pacific Rim countries expand their coal burning capacity. Mr Budge has proved the doubters wrong once, but can he pull the same trick off a second time?

## PolyGram blames slipped discs for 18% downturn

Patrick Toohar

PolyGram, the world's largest record company, yesterday underlined the problems besetting the global music industry by reporting a sharp drop in annual profits.

Aging rock stars, the general lack of new blockbuster acts and maturing markets for compact discs are being blamed for the overall slowdown in sales, despite mainly favourable economic conditions world-wide.

Last year PolyGram, majority-owned by Philips, the Dutch electronics group, saw net income drop by 18 per cent to 608m guilders (£197m). The biggest hit came in the music division where operating profits fell from 1.15bn guilders to 1.11bn guilders. A 160m guilders charge was also taken to cover the cost of making around 550 staff redundant.

"This was a challenging year for PolyGram's music division, particularly in the US where market instability is likely to persist for next six to 12 months," said Alan Levy, president and chief executive officer.

In response, PolyGram is re-vamping its Motown operation by moving the famous soul music label's headquarters from Los Angeles to New York in a bid to recreate its heydays of the 1960s and early 1970s.

The group's European music distribution and marketing are also being reorganised and its classical music division is being restructured.

Mr Levy admitted the \$41bn (£25bn) global music market had reached a plateau in 1996,

when it grew by only 3 per cent after several years of double-digit increases, but he forecast future annual growth rates of at least 5 per cent. "We do not believe the music business to be a mature industry," he said.

Nevertheless, Mr Levy acknowledged there was a shortage of good record releases. "I think the issue is one of creativity. The music makes the market," he said.

PolyGram was dealt another blow before Christmas when the Irish band U2 delayed the release of their new album, *Pop*, until next month.

Significantly, no PolyGram act sold more than 5 million albums for the first time in recent years, increasing the record company's hefty marketing costs as a proportion of sales. PolyGram's top selling album in 1996 was The Cranberries' *To The Faithful Departed*, which sold 4.4 million copies, followed by Bryan Adams' *18* at 3.9 million.

Industry observers say the six big record companies, which control almost 80 per cent of all music sales, are trying to cater for increasingly fragmented local markets and tastes at the expense of established pop stars.

"At the local level each individual record company is selling their own indigenous artist. That means the likes of Phil Collins, Sting and Bryan Adams are not selling in the volumes they used to," said Martin Talbot of *Music Week* magazine.

Analysts are also concerned that the growing popularity of sounds such as hip-hop, country and gospel - coupled with an

aging listenership - mean the music industry is unlikely to grow at historical rates without a new and exciting technology.

"We do not believe there is a high probability that one sound will transcend enough of the market niches to be as broadly popular as it may have been in the past," commented Goldman Sachs, the US investment bank, in a report.

New technology, notably the emergence of compact discs (CDs) and the portable Sony Walkman in the early Eighties, was a key driver of music sales as fans shifted entire record collections from vinyl to the new format.

Nothing new is on the horizon today. The arrival of the digital compact cassette (DCC) was almost still-born while demand for Sony's Mini Disc looks limited to Japan, which has always had a stronger appetite for new technology. And although music companies and retailers have created web sites on the Internet, they are unlikely to appeal to a mass market over the next two to three years.

While bootlegging has become less of a problem, at least in the developed economies, the growth of discount retailers like Wal-Mart in the US - the world's largest music market - and the greater buying clout of supermarkets in Europe have added to pressure on record companies' margins.

This in turn has led to a greater concentration of sales of top 40 hits at the expense of back-catalogue sales, which used to earn some big labels up to 40 per cent of their income. All this has affected sentiment towards EMI and PolyGram, the two quoted European record companies whose shares have been sliding down the stock market charts in the last six months. EMI has fallen from 1.485p to 1.161p, while PolyGram has slipped from 100 guilders to as low as 76 guilders.

But nobody is writing off the music giants yet. Indeed, the success of Britpop in spawning bands like Oasis, Blur and Pulp has breathed new life into British music industry.

Centrica to trade on Exchange from Monday as shareholders vote for group to be split



Splitting up: David Varney (left) and Richard Giordano at the split-up

## British Gas exodus of 4,000 to cost £500m

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

A further 4,000 staff applied to leave British Gas in the last three months of 1996, it was confirmed yesterday, as shareholders backed the management's plans to split the group into two separate companies.

The continuing deluge of staff means 10,000 additional employees have taken advantage of British Gas's voluntary redundancy programme on top of the 25,000 job cuts outlined in the original plans.

Demerger documents published last month revealed the group is to spend a further £500m to fund the extra job cuts, on top of the £1.65bn restructuring charge which launched the programme in 1993.

Yesterday's extraordinary general meeting at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham featured the usual flood of shareholder anger at British Gas's service problems, including last year's high-profile difficulties with a computer billing system.

The proceedings reached a climax when Neville Goldrein, a small investor, moved an amendment that Richard Giordano should be sacked from the chairman's job. Mr Goldrein found a seconder from the audience, but his motion was

overwhelmingly defeated on a show of hands.

However, the gathering was smaller than some recent British Gas shareholder meetings, with a turnout of only 473 investors. However, interest in the postal vote was more impressive, with 335,000 shareholders voting out of a total of about 1.7 million. British Gas said small investors had voted by a margin of 10 to one in favour of the demerger, with big City investors predictably giving their support.

The vote means British Gas's supply division will trade from Monday as a separate quoted company, Centrica, though it will continue to use the old name on customer bills. British Gas will run the pipeline network and gas exploration activities under a new group name, BG, to be headed by David Varney.

Centrica shares have already risen strongly since trading began on the unofficial "grey market" this week, and gained another 5p to 71p yesterday. Former executives are likely to breathe a sigh of relief that yesterday's gathering was the company's last shareholders' meeting in its current guise. In the years since Cedric Brown's bumper pay rise these events have turned into a savage public attack on the management. Investment column, page 22

## Lloyds Abbey Life profits surge

Magnus Grimstad

Lloyds Abbey Life yesterday confirmed the continued bounce-back in the life and pensions market from the mis-selling scandals with a storming 30 per cent rise in profits to £548m.

The record figures for the 12 months to December - the last as a separately quoted company - help explain the recent decision by Lloyds TSB, the group's parent, to spend £1.7bn buying out the 37 per cent of the shares it did not then own. They also provide a foretaste of

the record £2.5bn profits the bank itself is expected to report in its own 1996 results due out tomorrow.

The LAL figures were driven by strong growth in unit trust and pension sales. Although LAL has taken a further £13.7m charge for pension mis-selling, bringing the total provision to £96.6m, Laurel Powers-Freeling, finance director, said: "People are more confident buying pensions again and I think that will continue." Economic conditions were favourable, while the industry had come through the bad publicity, she believed.

But the big growth in 1996 came in unit trust sales, which soared 56 per cent to £505m, against a 5 per cent increase in regular premiums to £127m and a 6 per cent uptick in single premiums to £704m. Mrs Powers-Freeling said the unit trust performance was economically driven. "The whole industry has done well and in a time of rising equity markets people are attracted to unit trusts," she added.

The biggest contributor to the increased profits was Black Horse Financial Services, the broker dedicated to selling to

the bank's customer base which is shortly to be merged with the TSB life insurance operations. Profits there soared 32 per cent to £160m.

Other strong performers in the year were Lloyds Bank Insurance Services, the broking operation, where profits climbed 44 per cent to £133m and Black Horse Agencies, the estate agency chain. That returned to the black with a £4m profit, reversing a £9.5m loss last time. Abbey Life, the business aimed at independent financial intermediaries, saw its profits rise 12 per cent to £167m.

## Schroders to stand by Clyde

Gulf Canada has given up hope of gaining the support of Clyde Petroleum's largest shareholder as its £500m bid for the British oil explorer approaches a nail-biting climax, writes Tom Stevenson.

Schroders, which holds 19 per cent of Clyde's shares, is understood to see more value in the company than Gulf's final 120p-a-share offer which closes next Tuesday and is expected to stand by the incumbent management.

Schroders' decision could be enough to swing the bid in Clyde's favour after PDM, its second-largest shareholder, sold its 14.6 per cent stake earlier this week. That gave Gulf just under 29.9 per cent of Clyde, the limit imposed by Takeover Panel rules, and appeared to put the Canadian company in a commanding position.

Gulf is focusing its efforts on securing the 20 per cent it needs from holders of the 50 per cent of shares not held by itself or Schroders.

Schroders would not comment yesterday on its decision, except to say that it had not yet made up its mind. Gulf has meetings scheduled for today and tomorrow with undecided shareholders, including Schroders, at which it will attempt to gain the support of the remaining floating voters.

In a final exchange of letters yesterday the two sides wrote to shareholders with their final arguments. Gulf focused on the potential for a fall in Clyde's share price, if it escapes the bid.

## Bim Bim of Cairo gives Cadbury a bite of the Middle East market

Nigel Cope

Cadbury Schweppes has embarked on an Arabian adventure with the acquisition of Egypt's largest chocolate company. It has paid an undisclosed sum for Bim Bim, the curiously named Cairo company which controls 26 per cent of Egypt's confectionery market and is the dominant player in the whole of the Middle East and North Africa region.

Though selling chocolate in Africa might sound trying to sell ice lollies to Eskimos, Cadbury says the local market is growing strongly and that candy bars are popular snacks. "It's not baking hot there all the time," a spokeswoman said.

Founded in Cairo in 1961, Bim Bim is privately owned and

the controlling family has asked that its identity not be disclosed. Though the purchase price has also not been revealed, Bim Bim recorded sales of £32m last year and has net assets of £35m.

Its most popular brands of chocolate bar are Gussy and Sando, while another is called Mummy.

Bim Bim controls 13 per cent of the Middle Eastern confectionery market. Cadbury already has an Egyptian business but was keen to strengthen its position in a region of more than 120 million people.

"Ian Johnstone, managing director of Cadbury Schweppes said: "Bim Bim, in conjunction with Cadbury Egypt, will give us market leadership in both Egypt and the region and put us in a very strong position to benefit from further growth."

The move comes a day after Cadbury Schweppes, under its new chief executive John Soderland, confirmed it had completed the £623m sale of its joint venture Coca Cola bottling plants.

In a separate move yesterday Cadbury Schweppes announced that it was to market to British consumers a line in quality continental European chocolate bars made by Poulin of France. It has launched three bars from Poulin - in dark, plain and vanilla-flavoured white chocolate - aimed at the serious chocolate lover.

"Consumers have become increasingly accustomed to continental tastes and have consequently developed a more sophisticated palate," Cadbury said.

Cadbury shares closed 3.5p lower at 478.5p.



John Sutherland: New chief executive broadening horizons

## BT deal with MCI gets Cruickshank's backing

British Telecom's drive to obtain approval in the US for its £12bn takeover of long-distance operator MCI was given a significant boost yesterday by Don Cruickshank, the UK industry regulator, writes Chris Godsmark.

In a speech in Washington last night he comprehensively demolished the attack on the merger launched by AT&T, arguing that Britain offered competitive opportunities for new phone companies which were "equal to any in the world, if not better".

The comments came as merger documents filed in the US showed the two top MCI executives will receive a £130m (£80m) bonanza of share options if the deal succeeds. Without naming BT or

AT&T directly, Mr Cruickshank attacked claims from the US that it was difficult for rival operators to gain access to the British market. The US regulator, the Federal Communications Commission, has said it will only approve the merger if it can be demonstrated that US carriers have as much chance of breaking into the UK market as British operators will have in America.

AT&T, which is expanding its UK operations, claims it has been hampered by the UK's "indirect access" system, where its customers have to dial a three-digit code to get access to the company's long-distance services. The US carrier argues that BT's dominance of local residential phone lines means rival operators will always face a

competitive disadvantage. In the US long-distance carriers enjoy direct access to customers, a system known as dialling parity.

However, Mr Cruickshank said the indirect access policy was the only way to encourage the cable companies to build local phone networks. He said: "This is perhaps the difference between our two regulatory frameworks which it is hardest for Americans to understand.... For the UK dialling parity is not the lynchpin of market opening. Far from it."

Though the comments were also a clear defence of Mr Cruickshank's own record, they were welcomed by BT sources. An AT&T spokesman declined to comment, though the speech is likely to be viewed by the group as a significant setback.

### property de

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## business

## Shareholders back Centrica spin-off from British Gas

British Gas paved the way for the demerger of its Centrica gas production to distribution business yesterday with an overwhelming show of support from shareholders at an extraordinary meeting in Birmingham. But investors could be in for a bumpy ride when the new shares start trading separately from the British Gas rump, to be imaginatively renamed BG, on Monday.

Already the grey market, which started at the beginning of the week ahead of official dealings, is pointing the way. Last week a Centrica warrant launched by Barclays de Zoete Wedd was putting an implied price of around 50p on the shares. Yet in grey market trading yesterday the price was up another 5p to 75.5p. Meanwhile, the rump BG has steadily slid from a 186p opening to 163.5p, down 3.75p yesterday.

Although grey market dealings are notoriously unreliable in predicting the level at which real trading eventually settles down, the trend is supported by those reading the runes. Analysts reckon Centrica has more going for it than BG, over which the

cloud of the gas regulator's proposals last year to slash 20 per cent from its revenues still hangs.

The old management team which locked Centrica into buying gas at way above market prices has gone, while, paradoxically, the spot price has been going up again this winter. How close it gets to Centrica's average cost of gas, put at just under 20p a therm by NatWest Markets, will be crucial for valuing the company. At 14p, NatWest reckons the asset value is 66p, rising to 99p if the price rises to 16p.

Key questions will be how many people switch away from the company's necessarily high prices as the market is opened up to competition. In the limited competition trials thus far, the British Gas brand, which Centrica keeps, is limiting the damage.

Centrica is also being spun off with a very useful dowry in the shape of the Morecambe Bay gas field. It is only the profits and cash from that highly valuable asset, worth £2.5bn according to analysts, which will keep the group in the black for the first few years of its independent existence. It could also prove a useful bargaining tool in any fur-

ther deals with oil companies to shed the burden of the long-term gas contracts.

Finally, both Morecambe and Centrica's customer base could prove attractive to bidders ranging from US utilities to big oil groups like Shell and even perhaps electricity companies like PowerGen, already big in gas, or Scottish Hydro, which nearly bought the Scottish end last year.

BG, meanwhile, looks something of a Cinderella stock. It is heavily regulated, yet with a golden share which would prove a potent block to takeover and a dividend which could tumble from 14.5p to 5.5p on some estimates. Centrica shares, promising no dividend yield, will be subject to selling pressure from income funds, but bid talk makes them worth holding.

## Disposals cheer Rexam

Shares in Rexam, the former Bowater packaging business, have underperformed the FTSE All-Share by a thumping

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN  
EDITED BY TOM STEVENSON

40 per cent in the last two years so it is hardly surprising that the company is facing a mountain of negative sentiment.

After two profits warnings in a year under the previous management investors have seen the stock slide from 517p in summer 1995 to 328p, down 1.5p yesterday.

But with new management, led by Swedish chief executive Rolf Borjesson, in place since last July, the City is weighing up

whether Rexam is on the turn. In December Mr Borjesson announced his intention to sell 20 underperforming businesses.

Yesterday, two found early buyers, with Otis Specialty Papers going to Wausau Paper Mills, the US market leader, for £36m and PT Rexam Mulox of Indonesia sold to a local group for £1.3m.

These deals came earlier than many in the City had been expecting and there were en-

couraging noises from analysts yesterday about the rhetoric being backed up by some action.

Going forward, disposals are likely to prove harder and more costly. The two businesses sold yesterday were two of the more attractive divisions in Rexam Octagon, the special unit set up last year to encompass all the assets due for disposal. Some of the other businesses are loss-makers whose sale is likely to see Rexam incur asset write-offs.

Other businesses tipped for sale include folding cartons for food and drink and non-lipstick cosmetic packaging. The health-care, building and engineering operations are not affected.

As Mr Borjesson gets to grips with Rexam he should be able to wring more cost-cutting out, with some removal of surplus capacity expected. With pulp prices near the bottom of the cycle the trick will be to bang on to packaging margins rather than being forced to cut prices.

Rexam's 1996 results, due next month, should show pre-tax profits of £164m, with Charterhouse Tiney forecasting £190m in 1997. That puts the shares on a forward rating of 15

falling to 13. Not cheap but worth holding to see if the new management can deliver on its promises.

## Compel set for re-rating

Compel has flourished on the back of rising demand from large corporations for someone else to come in and deal with all that confusing information technology stuff. It's a competitive market, but the margins squeezed out of clients such as the Post Office, British Nuclear Fuels and Robert Fleming are healthy and rising.

Compel came to the market in 1994 via a placing at 125p. Yesterday shares bounced 9p to 197.5p after a useful 18 per cent jump in half-year profits to £1.7m. Earnings per share were up by a similar margin to 7.09p.

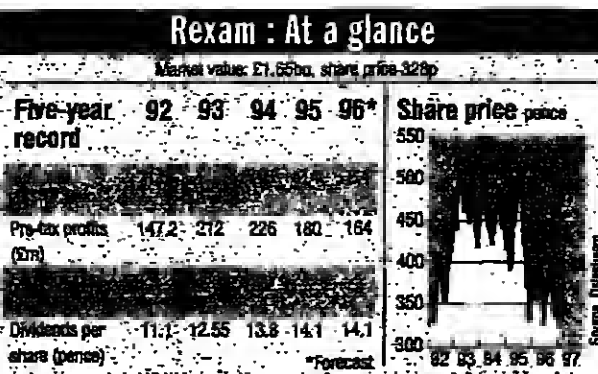
Focusing on the networks of desktop computers that are gradually taking over from previous generations of mainframes, Compel designs systems, supplies the hardware and software to run them, in-

stalls the equipment and trains the staff who will use them. As systems become more complex, Compel becomes ever more important to the end-user and relationships tend, as a result, to be fairly stable and long-term.

About 80 per cent of Compel's turnover is accounted for by only 30 clients, which might cause some concern about earnings quality except that in the past 12 months the company has not lost one large customer.

Growth will come from a number of areas. The trend away from mainframes towards shared servers will continue and corporates will continue to increase their IT budgets. That will increase the size of the cake while Compel should continue to increase the size of its slice by taking share from smaller competitors.

On the basis of forecast profits of £4.75m in the year to June and £7m the following year, the shares trade on a forward price/earnings ratio of 12.5 falling to 11. That's a stingy rating for growth of more than 20 per cent and the shares look set for a re-rating. Good value.



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## IN BRIEF

## C&amp;W makes £40m on Swedish sale

Cable & Wireless has made a profit of £40m after selling just over half its stake in a Swedish telecommunications operator, NetCom Systems. The news sent C&W's shares surging ahead to close 12.5p higher at 508.5p. C&W made its original 30.9 per cent investment in the Swedish Tel2 venture in 1990, but last year the stake was swapped for NetCom shares. The sale means C&W's 10.1 per cent holding in NetCom has dropped to 4.6 per cent. C&W insisted the sale did not have wider strategic implications, following the severing of the group's interest in the German Vebacom venture.

## Ushers to float at up to £120m

Ushers of Trowbridge, the West Country brewer, is taking a cautious approach to its second attempt at a stock market flotation. Although, not yet finalised, Ushers' flotation price is expected to be calculated on the basis of a historic price/earnings ratio of less than 12, a discount to both the market and other quoted regional brewers. Ushers pulled its last planned flotation in 1994, but chief executive Roger North (right) believes the company has addressed the issues that worried investors then.

Impact day, when the institutional placing will be priced, is expected to be 4 March and the company is understood to be planning a £40m cash-raising to give a market value between £100m and £120m. Ushers also announced the appointment of Tom Vyner, deputy chairman of J Sainsbury, as non-executive chairman.

## Brussels investigates French film aid

The European Commission is opening an inquiry into Fr2.5bn (£270m) of French state aid for the Société Française de Production, a TV and film production firm which is being privatised. At the same time, the commission has approved Fr350m of urgent aid to prevent SFP's financial collapse, while the French authorities complete the restructuring plan.

## PIA board shrinks to 17 members

The Personal Investment Authority, the financial services regulator, is to reduce the size of its board from 21 to 17 members. The reduction will take place at the PIA's general meeting in July, when four directors, two in the public-interest category and two practitioner members, stand down.

## Whessoe sells out to Siebe

Whessoe has agreed an offer by Siebe at 155p per share. The offer values the entire issued share capital of Whessoe at about £46m. There will be a share alternative of 31 new Siebe shares for every 200 Whessoe shares.

## Eagle Star expands in Ireland

BAT Industries' subsidiary Eagle Star has paid New Ireland Holdings IRE30m for Irish National Insurance. BAT said the acquisition will almost double Eagle Star's general insurance premium income in Ireland and increase its market share above 10 per cent.

## Labour sticks to plan for super-SIB

Labour's shadow economic secretary, Mike O'Brien (left), yesterday reaffirmed his party's plans for financial services regulators to be brought under the single umbrella of the Securities and Investments Board. There will be a distinction made between wholesale and retail market regulation, with the former having a "lighter touch". But he added that Labour did not want a US-style Securities and Exchange Commission, which he believes would be inappropriate to this country.

Mr O'Brien, speaking to a City audience at a lecture sponsored by Imro, the fund managers' regulator, said he also wanted to simplify many of the rules governing the industry. "We would rather have four rules that worked than 400 which tried to catch every eventuality but just succeeded in confusing everyone."

## Lang clears four bids

Ian Lang, Secretary for Trade and Industry, has decided not to refer the proposed acquisition by Lowndes Lambert Group Holdings of Fenchurch to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Other clearances announced yesterday were the acquisition by Clariant UK of the paper chemical business of Hickson & Welch, the acquisition by Kingfisher's subsidiary Comet Group of Norway's retail division and the Firstbus takeover of the local bus business of Stotts Coaches of Oldham.

## American offers pilots new deal

American Airlines said it has offered the Applied Pilots Association a new labour contract ahead of the expiry of the union's deadline on Saturday for calling a vote on the strike.

## Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Compel Group (p)	39.5m (40.4m)	1.70m (1.44m)	7.09p (6.06p)	1.8p (1.54p)
Intersect Tech (*)	157m (-)	-1.01m (-)	-11.07p (-)	nil (-)
Freeport Leisure (p)	3.2m (2.1m)	1.02m (0.50m)	3.49p (2.7p)	nil (-)
Life Sciences (p)	230m (205m)	127.2m (24.0m)	10.1p (9p)	4.5p (-)
Pearson's Group (p)	5.8m (5.7m)	0.18m (0.17m)	4.22p (1.25p)	nil (-)
Reckard Holdings (p)	43.8m (38.7m)	3.5m (2.9m)	5.4p (5.3p)	2.75p (2.6p)
Vicent Action (p)	35.1m (76.2m)	8.31m (8.3m)	14.2p (13.88p)	4.1p (-)

(p) - First (q) - listed (\*) - 7 ntd period † pre-tax profit pre-exceptional charges

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sport

# When Cassius Clay went into orbit I found it difficult to understand why older sportswriters developed a prejudice against him

The old sportswriters I knew received no rewards for their vintage. They still had to meet deadlines. They had to argue with hotel telephonists, plead with telex operators, struggle with baggage, and climb the stairs to press boxes ailed in thrombosis territory.

One had the reputation of falling asleep at ringside. Another drove his car into the blue-painted wall of a parking lot - I know this to be true because I was sitting alongside him - proclaiming, "Damn, I thought it was the sky."

When health became fashionable, a boxing writer of wise and independent virtue retreated to a corner of his office to sit beneath a sign that read: "Here we drink, smoke and screw."

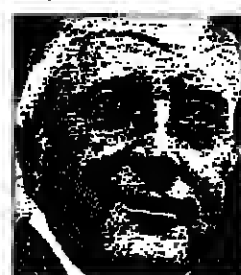
Some years ago a friend, Frank McGee, who was big in the old *Daily Mirror*, and in semi-retirement reports perceptively on football for the *Observer*, had the idea for a book about sports journalism with the splendid title, *Forgive Us Our Press Passes*; you can probably imagine the stir this caused in the trade and the effect on the divorce rate had it come to fruition.

Without lusting to find out personally, I suppose that everyone's later years are sapped endurance ("I look first for stamina," said one sports editor) and fading memory. Not a happy bunch, I thought, no many nights, hearing old sportswriters tell flat stories of hunched text and famous suggestions while demanding crustily the silence of

apprenticeship - "eyes and ears open, mouth shut" - from their younger brethren.

Recently, the wife of a troubled football manager supposed that the attitude of sportswriters, meaning the profession generally, has changed a great deal, especially since the explosion in television coverage. A big difference, you may agree, is the decline in objectivity. This was embarrassingly evident during Euro 96 when English football writers not only adopted the role of cheerleaders but literally stood and applauded the efforts of Terry Venables's team.

The American author Roger Khan, a man of vast experience in the field, recalled a time when sportswriters were instructed on their



KEN JONES

unimportance. "A generation of sports editors preached anti-ego sermons," he said. "Nobody cares about you, your ulcer, your bent dreams." Few of them ever let you forget that even the best pieces would probably end up as a cod's overcoat.

Bearing objectivity in mind there was a great deal to be learned some years ago from *No Cheering in the Press Box*, a book by a Chicago baseball writer, Jerry Holtzman, that contained the reminiscences of much older contemporaries. One, John R. Tamm, then 84, had composed a score of books on young athletes struggling and winning. He said: "I've written what I wanted and tried to explain there is more to life than throwing a football."

Nobody meditated on sport with greater perception and style than Red Smith, who was still contributing three columns a week to the *New York Times* when he died in his 75th year. After a visit to Loodoo, he said: "When you go through Westminster Abbey, you find that ex-

cepting for that little Poets' Corner, almost all the statues are of killers. Of generals and admirals whose specialty was human slaughter. I don't think they're such glorious heroes. I've tried not to exaggerate the glory of athletes."

Nor should anyone. In the wider scheme of things, sport is trivia. It can excite and make the day after victory a better day for communities and nations, but anyone with the task of reporting it should abide by the rule of circumspection.

Probably, I could have been more generous to Naseem Hamed when reporting on his defeat of Tom Johnson at the London Arena last weekend to become a double featherweight champion. It was something that Hamed's pro-

monitor, Frank Warren, raised, although without rancour. Warren's view is that the irritation Hamed causes is generational. There is something in this. When Muhammad Ali, as Cassius Clay, first went into orbit I found it difficult to understand why older sportswriters of that time developed a prejudice against him, making negative comparisons with past heavyweight champions.

Maybe a similar fault applies to some of us today and maybe we are reacting subconsciously to the wilder claims that are made for Hamed, the propaganda drummed up on television and in mass-circulation newspapers. He is of his time, which for some is a different time altogether.

## Colonial making himself at home

Jonathan Swift, when Bishop of Dublin, once famously noted that: "When a true genius appears in the world, you shall know him by this sign: that all the dunces are in confederacy against him."

Andrew Caddick, for all the brilliance of his bowling in the second Test in Wellington, is not a genius. However, he was easily England's most menacing bowler and, by not picking him sooner, the England management are certainly guilty of being dunces. And, if speculation surrounding them is to be believed, probably even ones that are in confederacy against him. A crime which, now that England cannot lose the series, may yet slip away unexplained.

Naturally, theories abound as to why the Somerset fast bowler has not appeared in a Test this winter until Wellington last week. A current favourite is that his absence was due to a personality clash with both his captain and coach, a state of affairs that was only reassessed after Alan Mullally's poor display at Auckland.

There is no doubt that as part of the Lancashire set-up - which has always placed great emphasis on team spirit - Atherton and David Lloyd are prone to judge candidates as a person first and a player second. If so, and some will argue that is how it should be done, then players like Caddick and Graeme Hick are always going to be on the margins. As colonialists, they tend to lack the home-grown idioms and social manners necessary to endear themselves naturally to people, as, for instance, Robert Croft does. If talent was the only concern, though, the likes of

Andrew Caddick is set to play for England in the city of his birth. The fast bowler spoke to Derek Pringle

Caddick and Hick really ought to be at the team's heart.

It is an emotive subject that just about everyone has a view on, including Caddick, who unsurprisingly feels put out that many consider him an unwelcome interloper, particularly over an issue he sees as little more serious than not possessing a British sense of humour. "I moved to England to play cricket professionally. I'm an ambitious person so it is only natural that I should

*'I'm ambitious, so it is only natural that I should want to play cricket to the best of my ability'*

want to do that to the best of my ability. The pinnacle of that is playing for England and that's why I'll stand at the front and sing the national anthem."

But does he want to sing the national anthem? "Why wouldn't I, I'm playing for England. It might be my adopted country but I want to play for it. As far as I'm concerned, it should be the same for every one playing country cricket. If I isn't, then those players without the same ambitions shouldn't be playing. As far as I see it, I'm

just being criticised for being ambitious."

However Caddick, now 28, does not believe his non-selection this winter was personal. Instead he puts it down to never "getting back on his feet" after being floored by the virus that had also blighted Atherton, soon after the team landed in Zimbabwe.

"I should, in hindsight, have been more forceful and not played in any of the warm-up matches until I was ready," he said. "But when you haven't been in the team for so long, you're eager to get back. Rushing it probably damaged me for longer than I knew, but I also think that the management became obsessed with having variety [presumably in the shape of Alan Mullally's left-arm swing] simply for the sake of it."

Others see it differently and, for his part, Lloyd believes Caddick to be someone who constantly needs to be pampered and told how good they are which, if true, is exactly what Lloyd, as England coach, should be doing, even if it means mashing up some Farley's rusks and dispensing jelly beans.

Lloyd is probably not that wide of the mark, and there is no doubt that Caddick, who is not overly self-confident, lacks the outward self-assurance of, say, a Cork or Gough. Unlike them, he is highly self-critical, probably too much so, but only because he believes it will show him in a better light should things turn out wrong. Where he comes from, sport, especially rugby, is as important as life, and it is how many will eventually come to judge you.

Interestingly, Caddick did not play rugby, thereby eschewing the traditional - and more or less compulsory - rite of passage for male New Zealanders, a factor which may explain why he has readily settled down to married life with his wife, Sarah, in Taunton rather than Christchurch.

What he did share with New Zealanders was a lust for travel, and when he had finished at Papanui High School, he came to England. But as well as seeing relatives - both his parents were born in England - he played cricket for Hampstead, who, through club connections, then brought him to the attention of Jack Brinkshaw, then Somerset's coach.

In a trial game for the Somerset second XI against Surrey second XI in 1988, he took 8 for 36, a performance that immediately saw him bundled off to Lord's, where he was told that the qualification period to become an Englishman would take five years. In fact, once he had secured a British passport, it took four, and he played his first full season for Somerset in 1992.



Family reunion: Andrew Caddick with his mother, Audrey, and father, Chris, at their home in Christchurch before the third Test, which starts in the city tomorrow. Photograph: Empics

With his tall, whippy action and ability to swing and seam the ball, it was not long before he began to scale the ladder, first with England A and then making his England debut in the first Test against Australia at Old Trafford in 1993.

Since then he has played just 10 matches, taking 35 wickets at 36.65. It is an acceptable rather than respectable average, that is undoubtedly the product of a stop-start career blighted by shin injuries.

He talks bitterly about those who thought him soft for being injured in such a way, and he vividly remembers Paul Allott once dismissing his problems as being so trivial that they must have been caused by his diet. "The mornings I spent crawling on all fours just to get to the toilet and then having to crawl

downstairs to spend the next hour or so icing my shins. It is not an experience I recommend," he says with great chagrin.

In the end he needed two operations - one cheerily called a drill and scrape - to alleviate what has now been diagnosed as a defect he has probably had since birth. Apparently he has a fused bone in his ankle which prevents his foot from pronating (turning outwards) naturally as he bowls; an action that absorbs much of the shock involved as the foot is banged down.

Instead his foot rolls the other way, which leaves his shin to take the brunt of the shock, and he now bowls wearing scuba diver's legging in order to keep his post-operative shins warm and supple.

He may have missed most of 1994 and 1995 through injury, but when he bowls as he did during the last Test, with pace and swing, he is good enough to trouble any player in the world. Gough may have got the bulk of the wickets (nine to Caddick's six) but it was Caddick who got the respect, his awkward bounce giving England's cud-chewing attack some new fangs with which to devour their hesitant opponents.

It is not in the nature of fast bowlers, even sensitive ones, to be overly nostalgic. Christchurch might be Caddick's home town, and the place where his parents still live, but he is adamant that England is where his future lies. It seems that the only "Green green grass" he is interested in will be on the Lancaster Park pitch.

## England can adapt to 'result' pitch

DEREK PRINGLE reports from Christchurch

England can expect no favours from the Lancaster Park groundsman as New Zealand attempt to salvage a draw from this three-match series. To do that they need to win the final Test, which starts tomorrow (tonight British time). If rumours of a fast, grassy track turn out to be true - and the inclusion of Heath Davis in the squad suggests they will - Valentine's Day may not come much bloodier.

New Zealanders do not much like losing. Unfortunately, with a cricket team as indisposed as theirs, most other options are pie in the sky unless a reckless gamble comes off on an underprepared pitch.

It is a pity they tried the last time England toured, after they had gone one down in the first Test. On that occasion, it was the Auckland pitch that was prepared with salad tasters rather than a lawnmower, a risk that ultimately backfired when Graham Gooch, managed to score a hundred in the second innings and set up England for victory.

Cricket pitches are probably the most scrutinised pieces of turf on the planet. Even on a good day, when they look flat and even, they attract attention, and unless pampered regularly can prove unpredictable, though the pitch here is usually one of the best to bat on in New Zealand.

According to the England coach, David Lloyd, a deliberately prepared result pitch is the only factor, other than injury, that is likely to prevent England from playing an unchanged side for the first time in 32 Tests - the last occasion being the Barbados and Antigua matches against the West Indies, early in 1994.

That is a terrible slight upon Atherton's purported desire for continuity, as well as being an indicator of how fickle the England selectors are when under pressure from poor results. At the moment, that is not the case, and the most heartening thing about England's comprehensive victory in Wellington is that it was achieved with two key players - Dominic Cork and Nick Knight - way below their best. Of most significance, however, was the way in which England's fielding has improved, particularly their slip catching, with Knight outstanding at second slip.

These improvements have made England's cricket appear more intense, an assessment with which Lloyd heartily concurs. "A lot of our aggression comes from behind the wicket," he said after England had ad-

vised in Christchurch. "It gives tremendous confidence to the bowlers, as well as intimidating the opposition, who know if they're going to edge it, we're going to get hold of it."

The balance of the bowling attack, with two spinners, is another pleasing factor of England's success. It would not be possible without Stewart filling the all-round role - of keeping wicket and batting at No 3 - with such aplomb. His form in both areas has been outstanding, and he is on the brink of breaking Bob Taylor's wicket-keeping record of 13 dismissals in a series against New Zealand.

Stewart is also on the brink of equalling John Edrich's record of 10 scores of 50 or more in successive Tests. Vivian Richards may be the overall leader with 12, but Stewart's record of scoring at least 50 in every Test since his return last summer is a stupendous effort considering he has been wearing the gloves as well. It is the kind of consistency Lee Germon and Steve Rixon would give up their manogrammed shell suits for and, so far, only the adhesive Blair Pooch has shown the necessary commitment and concentration required to score runs at this level.

With that in mind, they have brought in Matthew Horne - one of the batting successes for New Zealand A at Wanganui - to bolster the middle order. Horne replaces Adam Parore, one of several descending stars (Chris Cairns is another) and one who, having been banned from playing for his regional first-class team, has the unenviable task of trying to calm the selectors' eye without a platform from which to do it.

Circumstances dictate that this will be a fascinating, if short-lived, Test match. Unfortunately, spectator interest, apart from the many package tours from the UK, is likely to be low. It was exactly the same situation here five years ago, when England won thanks to an amazing six-wicket burst by Phil Tufnell on the final day. On that occasion, England, always keen to practise, turned up on the first morning of the match at 8.30. When they got there, not only did they find the gates shut, but no one there to open them.

In the end, it was left to the captain, Graham Gooch, to scale them and go in to summon the groundsman, who begrudgingly opened up. Unless the locals have become more philosophical about losing, England may not be so lucky this time.

THE EUROPEAN RYDER CUP captain, Severiano Ballesteros, launches his 1997 European Tour campaign in the Dimeosion Data pro-am in Sun City, South Africa, today, hoping to revive his flagging career.

The Gary Player Country Club holds fond memories for the Spaniard. It was over this lush 7,484-yard course that Ballesteros once won the Million Dollar Challenge. Three of the four rounds of the £400,000 event will be played on the course. The remaining round will be played on the adjacent and equally demanding Lost City course.

Nick Price, Zimbabwe's former world No 1, will also be looking for a win in this second of three European-sanctioned events on the South African Tour. Price is looking to break a winless run that stretches back

## Price finding touch

Golf

14 months and has left him languishing in 12th place in the world rankings.

There are signs that Price, who admits to having "problems getting the line right with the putter", is starting to find his touch on the greens.

After a comparatively sedate first round of 72 in the South African Open, an event he lost by one shot to Fiji's Vijay Singh at Glendower Country Club in Johannesburg last week, the Price of old started to emerge. He closed with rounds of 66, 65 and 68, and now that he has recovered from persistent sinus problems he is re-emerging as a formidable force.

Europe's main challenge could come from the 44-year-old Irishman Eamonn Darcy, who presented such a threat to the South African Open before fading in the final two rounds to finish 12th, 11 shots behind Singh.

## Von Grünigen takes Tomba's world crown

Skiing

Italians descended on Sestriere in their thousands yesterday, blocking approaches to the World Championship venue to watch their prince of the piste, Alberto Tomba, defend his giant slalom title.

In the event, La Bomba, who has had a poor season, bombed out one minute into the first run, leaving Switzerland's Michael Von Grünigen to take his first championship gold medal. Von Grünigen, the giant slalom World Cup holder, clocked a combined time over the two legs of 2min 48.23sec. The Norwegian all-rounder Lasse Kjus won his third silver of the championships, with Austria's Andreas Schifferer a surprise third. Results, Digest, page 27

## Williams to avoid trial 'circus'

Motor racing DERICK ALLSOP

Frank Williams will be spared a court appearance in the Ayrtown Senna case for many weeks after the trial opens in Imola, Italy, next Thursday.

The head of the Williams team, his technical director Patrick Head and the chief designer Adrian Newey, plus the race director, Roland Bruynseraede, and two circuit officials are charged with culpable homicide following Senna's death in the San Marino Grand Prix on 1 May 1994.

Williams and his colleagues, however, are unlikely to be called before the judge until after the third anniversary of their driver's fatal crash and this year's race at Imola, which will be held on 27 April.

Lawyers are expected to account for the first day with pro-

cedural matters and the trial will then take its course, probably leading to the appeals ladder and legal wranglings in Italy can last anything up to a decade.

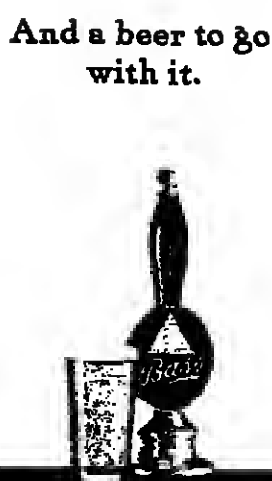
Meanwhile, Max Mosley, president of the sport's governing body, the FIA, said yesterday that he was optimistic Williams, McLaren and Tyrrell will be brought back into the fold after refusing to agree to a new deal on television and prize-money. Mosley estimated each team would lose about £30m by excluding themselves from the five-year contract. He also announced he would be standing for re-election as president in October for a further four-year term.

Michael Schumacher said yesterday that his Ferrari will not be good enough to win this season's F1 championship. "I don't yet have the car to become champion, but I hope to make progress. The car is faster and easier to drive," he said after six days of testing in Estoril.

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# Saints try to move in for Vialli

## Football

TOMMY STANFORTH

Gianluca Vialli, Chelsea's unsettled Italian striker, is having talks with the Southampton manager, Graeme Souness.

The Italian international yesterday had a working breakfast with Souness at the Grand Harbour Hotel, on Southampton's waterfront. The two are believed to have discussed details of a possible move to The Dell for the 32-year-old Vialli, who has fallen out of favour at Stamford Bridge and has criticised the Chelsea manager, Ruud Geul, for leaving him out of the first team.

Chelsea have consistently refused speculation that they wish to sell Vialli, but the Saints have not denied their interest. Southampton claim that Souness is on holiday and is "uncontactable" while the director of football, Lawrie McMenemy, said: "You had better ask the manager."

Souness and Vialli are old friends of the manager's spell as a player at Sampdoria, where the Italian used to clean his boots. Previously Souness has said of Vialli: "He has kept himself in good shape and lived right - he is a fine player and will do well wherever he plays."

Rangers are expected to sign Sweden's captain, Jonas Thern, from Roma in the summer - with the player set to earn a staggering £835,000 a year.

The Scottish champions look favourites to sign the 29-year-old midfielder after he admitted that it would be hard to refuse the offer he has received

from the Glasgow club. The Rangers chairman, David Murray, is reported to have offered Thern a minimum two-year, maximum three-year, contract.

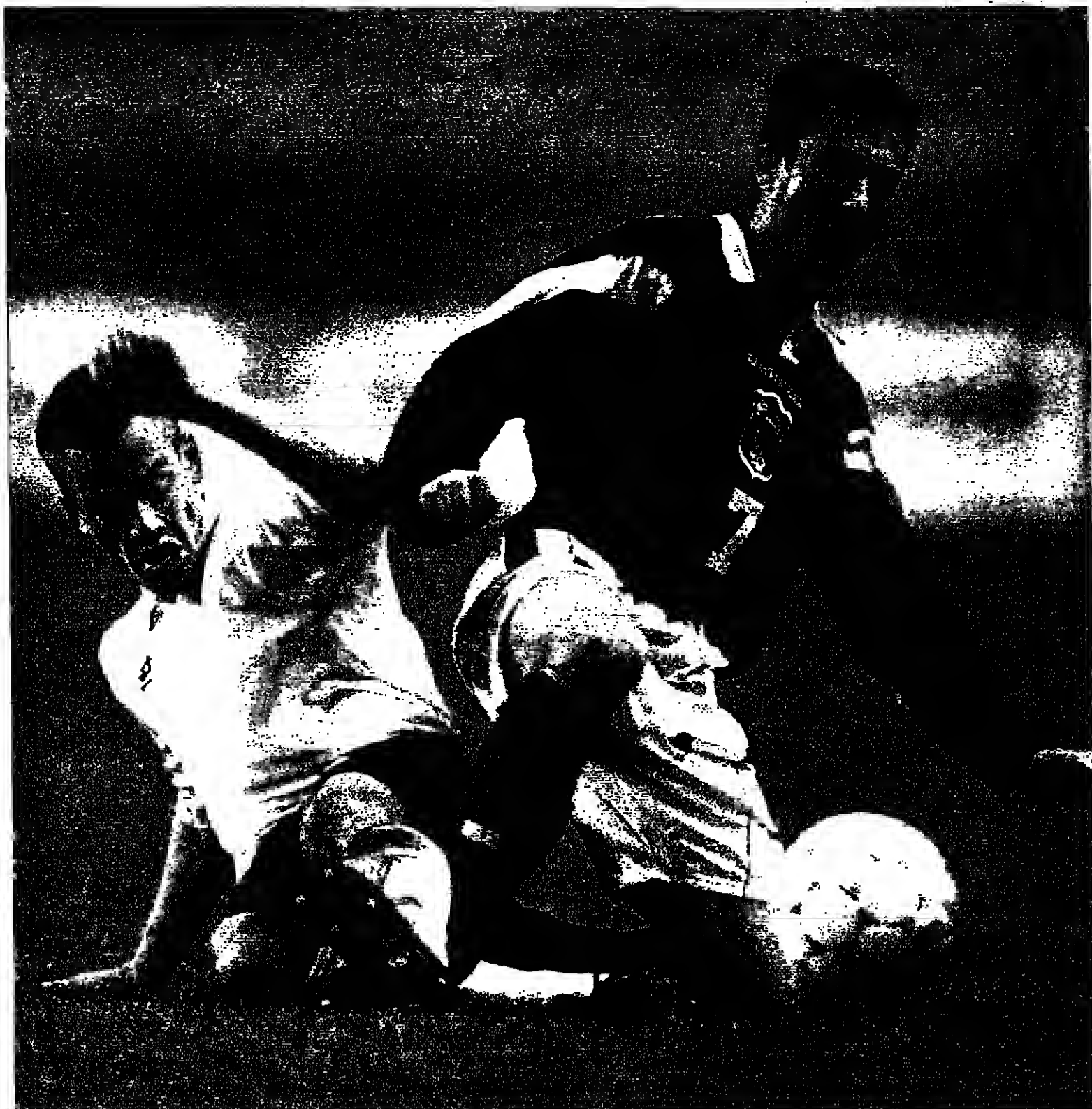
Thern revealed that three other clubs he has been offered - from Benfica, Napoli and Roma - would have to be combined to match what Rangers have put up. His international team-mate, Joachim Björklund, is already at Ibrox.

Thern will leave Roma on a free transfer at the end of the season even though Napoli, Fiorentina and Parma have all shown an interest in him. The Swede has also attracted attention from three clubs in his home country - Malmö, Helsingborg and IFK Göteborg.

Alphonse Tchami, a 25-year-old striker who played for Cameroon at the 1994 World Cup in the United States, has joined Sunderland on trial from Boca Juniors, of Argentina, with a view to a £1.4m transfer.

The Bayern Munich president, Franz Beckenbauer, has fuelled speculation that he is to quit his post to become Germany's first Sports Minister. "I have no passion for what I am doing here," the 51-year-old former World Cup winner said. "It is high time the sport had its own ministry."

The Lincoln City midfielder, Terry Fleming, has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association after allegedly giving a false name (that of team-mate Tony Dennis) to avoid being sent off. The 24-year-old was booked twice in seven minutes during the first half of their Third Division game against Wigan nine days ago.



John Collins, of Scotland, is brought to his knees by Estonia's Mati Päril in Tuesday's goalless draw in Monaco

Photograph: Mike Egerton/Emipics

## Quinn makes a hit

A fresh-faced fans' favourite looks likely to challenge John Dowie for the front-running role when Northern Ireland face Portugal in their World Cup qualifying next month.

West Ham's Dowie is still recovering from a broken ankle which has ruled him out of the games with Italy in Palermo and the 3-0 victory over Belgium on Tuesday night. He is expected to be fit again for the 29 March 29 match against Portugal at Windsor Park, Belfast, but he may not regain his international place because of the impression made by the Blackpool forward James Quinn.

Quinn, who has scored 13 goals this season for Blackpool, has made himself a hit with the Irish supporters, with his mobility, pace and shooting power. "He has been a real find - a player who can establish himself at international level," said Northern Ireland's manager, Bryan Hamilton.

In addition, Hamilton can call on Phil Gray, who plays in the Netherlands for Fortuna, Stoke's Gerard McMahon, Manchester United's Philip

Murphy and George O'Boyle, of St Johnstone.

But he warned: "Let's not get carried away by the 3-0 victory over Belgium. A lot of hard work lies ahead, but at least we are making progress."

Northern Ireland's hopes of qualifying for France 98 are still remote - with Germany favourites to qualify from group one, although victory over an erratic Portuguese side would keep the campaign doing. Maximum points from trips to Ukraine and Armenia in April and May would ensure a capacity crowd for the visit of the Germans to Belfast in August.

Hamilton is expected to include Murphy and Manchester City's 18-year-old midfielder, Jeff Whitley, in the squad against Portugal. "We must get Whitley into a competitive fixture, which means he could not be approached by any other country," Hamilton said.

Whitley, the first black player to be selected by the Irish FA at a youth level, was born in Zambia and could play for them or England as he holds a British passport.

## Scotland show inadequacies Gould's satisfaction

PHIL SHAW

With two-thirds of the Group Four fixtures still to be completed, it was never going to be Monte Carlo or bust for Scotland's World Cup prospects. All the same, a goalless display against Estonia in the play-off ground of the Côte d'Azur leaves Scotland with a lot of work to do before they can qualify for the 1998 World Cup.

The tempo required to drag the Estonian barrier out of shape was conspicuously absent until the 15 minutes before half-time.

During that period, a succession of chances came and went. But having created a modicum of panic through the crosses of Kevin Gallacher, the play went to Scotland's heads. Or rather to Duncan Ferguson's head. In the second half, with Gallacher mysteriously switched inside from the right flank, they resorted to pumping the ball hopefully in the direction of their towering striker.

The impression of it all enabled Estonia's equally tall stopper, Marek Lemsa, and the goalkeeper Mart Poom to take the ball in the air with consid-

erable success. Ferguson, who has scored only once at any level for his country, was fortunate not to be one of the three Scots substituted. Of those who were taken off, Paul McGee was a half-paced shadow of his former self, cementing the impression that he and Gary McAllister tend to duplicate each other.

At least now Scotland can be under no illusions as to the task facing them when Estonia visit Ayrshire on 29 March. Needless to say, the Estonians enjoyed the jaunt hugely and must now feel that their extraordinary decision not to turn up for the original fixture in Tallinn has been vindicated.

As a result of adding a point to their modest tally, the players from the tiny Baltic state also earned a bonus of £250 a man - equivalent to a month's wages and two and a half times the national monthly average. A vice-president of the Estonian FA, Mart Tarmak, said: "So far it has cost us quite a lot but we're not complaining. We were 128th in the FIFA world rankings, now we're 101st. This draw should help us climb even higher."

On the face of it a goalless home draw in a semi-deserted stadium is nothing to inspire anyone but Bobby Gould was acutely aware of the positive yesterday. Or at least he was in every other aspect except dimensionally.

"After you have shipped seven and three, conceding no goals twice makes you happy," the Wales manager said, reflecting on Tuesday's draw with the Republic of Ireland in Cardiff. "When you take into context that we were fielding four players either making their international or home debut it was satisfactory."

Wales' new-found solidity after the 10-goal two-game demolition by the Dutch has come since Gary Speed, a winger with Everton, has played as a sweeper. A footballer whose performance has not always been in proportion to his gifts, he has excelled at the centre of things.

"He's more involved than when he's out wide," Gould said. "He's still in the position where he can't come out and

GUY HODGSON

play but it will come. There were one or two occasions against the Irish where you thought 'here he comes' but it didn't materialise."

Once Speed has the confidence to attack as well as defend it will help solve the Welsh problem of finding invention further forward. An appearance by Ryan Giggs would not be detrimental either.

"The one thing I have to re-address is the Ryan Giggs situation," Gould said. "That will be done privately, without the pressures of the media. If the feelings of the public have not got through to him they will be communicated."

"If Ryan Giggs is not going to play in friendly international matches then the world will be told. People will not be conned. We don't want the situation where people are asking for refunds because he isn't playing."

If Giggs does return for next month's World Cup qualifier against Belgium then he might find the National Stadium in reduced circumstances. Wales are finding the Cardiff pitch too big and measures may be taken to reduce its size.

## Krajicek and Cash capture moment

### Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS reports from Dubai

It was a day for thoroughbreds. An update on the runners for the \$4m (£2.5) Dubai World Cup in the company of Frankie Dettori was followed by a check on the form of three Wimbledon champions, past and present, two of whom probably would have been shot had they been horses.

Richard Krajicek, the Dutchman who surprised Pete Sampras and the seeding committee with his victory at the All England Club last July, showed encouraging signs of rehabilitation after surgery to his right knee in December, the latest setback in a career handicapped by injuries.

Seeded No. 3 for the \$1m Dubai Open, Krajicek negotiated a difficult opening round against India's Leander Paes, a former Wimbledon junior champion, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2. A fascinating contest ended tamely, with Paes virtually immobile after straining a stomach muscle during the final set.

Krajicek has a film crew in tow, filming the build-up to his defence of the Wimbledon title. "It's a behind-the-scenes look at life on the circuit and shows the sort of life I lead," he said, underlining his determination to allow nothing to prevent his arrival on the Centre Court at 2pm precisely on 23 June when he is due to defend his title.

"Even if I have to swim over the Channel I'll be there."

Pet Cash is also filming here, using a camcorder to capture memories of his trip. The 1987 Wimbledon champion can be found hauling his own tennis baggage nowadays, a sort of Cash-and-carry with a wild card.

Few leading players have suffered as many injuries as the 31-year-old Australian, currently ranked No. 755 in the world, who had one of his best days for ages in defeating Spain's Carlos Costa, 7-6, 7-6.

Cash was at a loss to remember the last time he won a singles match on the main ATP Tour until he realised that it was here two years ago, when he beat Thomas Muster.

Relying on doubles matches to sharpen his form in order to gain entry to singles events, Cash was particularly disappointed to be defeated in the first round here when partnering Tim Henman, the British No. 1. "I'd been looking forward to playing with Tim for a long time, and we both played like crap," Cash said. "But I've learned that things can turn around quite quickly. Yesterday I felt like retiring. Today I felt quite good."

Boris Becker, Wimbledon champion in 1985, '86 and '89, delivered 26 aces yesterday but still had problems overcoming a young compatriot, Marc-Kevin Goellner, 6-3, 6-7, 6-2. Their only previous match had been at Wimbledon in 1993, Becker winning in four sets.

Yesterday, after a confident start, the seventh-seeded Becker surprisingly lost a second set tie-break, 7-5, and had to save two break points at 2-2 in the final set.

## Rehabilitation rules reviewed

Boxing

New methods to determine whether fighters are fit to compete are set to be introduced in the wake of Oliver McCall's emotional breakdown during his World Boxing Council title fight against Lennox Lewis in Las Vegas last week.

Marc Ratner, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, said his boxing

governing body are considering mandatory time limits for fighters to have completed rehabilitation programmes.

"There is culpability to be spread around and I accept it for our commission," Ratner said. "We have to learn from this and reconsider how we do things."

McCall had been taking part in drug and alcohol rehabilitation programmes during his training for the Lewis fight.

### FOOTBALL RESULTS

**Yesterday**  
**UEFA CUP** (Round of 16): Arsenal 2, Borussia Dortmund 1; Bayern Munich 2, Lazio 1; Juventus 1, Fiorentina 0; Liverpool 2, Tottenham 1; Manchester United 2, Chelsea 1; Real Madrid 2, Barcelona 1; Valencia 1, Athletic Bilbao 0; Athletic Bilbao 1, Real Sociedad 0; Real Sociedad 1, Deportivo La Coruña 0; Deportivo La Coruña 1, Real Betis 0; Real Betis 1, Real Girona 0; Real Girona 1, Real Murcia 0; Real Murcia 1, Real Jaen 0; Real Jaen 1, Real Oviedo 0; Real Oviedo 1, Real Valladolid 0; Real Valladolid 1, Real Zamora 0; Real Zamora 1, Real Logroñés 0; Real Logroñés 1, Real Sociedad 0; Real Sociedad 1, Real Betis 0; Real Betis 1, Real Girona 0; Real Girona 1, Real Murcia 0; Real Murcia 1, Real Jaen 0; Real Jaen 1, Real Oviedo 0; Real Oviedo 1, Real Valladolid 0; Real Valladolid 1, Real Zamora 0; Real Zamora 1, Real Logroñés 0; Real Logroñés 1, Real Sociedad 0; Real Sociedad 1, Real Betis 0; Real Betis 1, Real Girona 0; Real Girona 1, Real Murcia 0; Real Murcia 1, Real Jaen 0; Real Jaen 1, Real Oviedo 0; 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